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L I F E
OF
LAZARUS HOCHÉ.

[Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.]

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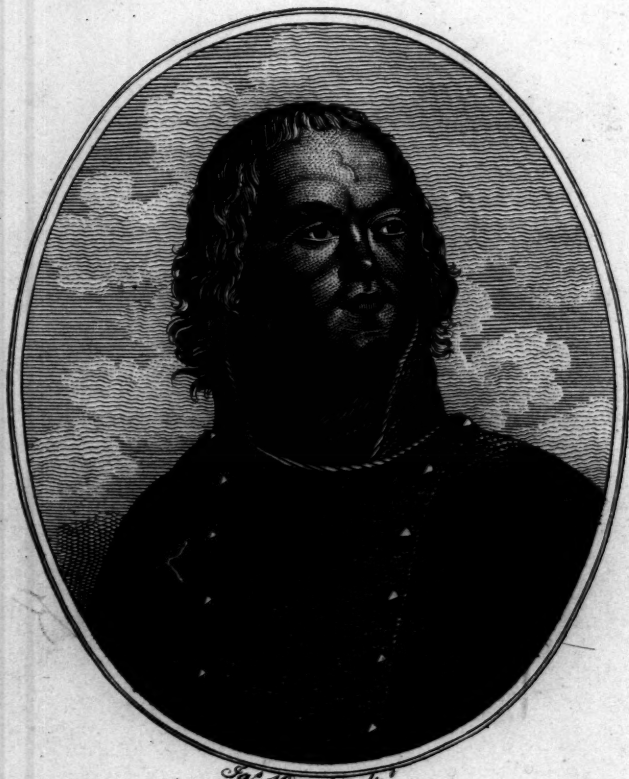
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LAVARUS HOCHHE

(Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.)





GEN^L. HOCHÉ.

*Non ille pro caris amicis,
Aut patria timidus perire.*

(Horace)

3
THE LIFE

OF

LAZARUS HOCHÉ,

GENERAL OF THE ARMIES

OF THE

FRENCH REPUBLIC.

BY

ALEXANDER ROUSSELIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. RIDGWAY, YORK STREET, ST. JAMES'S
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1799.

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LIFE

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GENERAL HOCHÉ

LAZARUS HOCHÉ was born June 24, 1768, in the suburbs of Versailles. His mother died in consequence of his birth. His father kept Louis the Fifteenth's dog-kennel. He was a respectable man; but the narrowness of his circumstances precluded young Hoche from the benefits of a liberal education. The greater part of the advantages, small as they were, which the youth enjoyed, he derived from the kindness of an aunt, who was a green-grocer at Versailles. She sent him to a day-school, where he soon learnt to read and write; and his propensity to mischief equalled the forwardness of his parts. He was always at the head of his class; nor was he less distinguished among his school-fellows in contests of personal prowess. The curate of St. Germain-en-Laye was struck with his lively parts, and made him a singing boy.

From his earliest infancy, he always wanted to know the reason of things; he questioned older persons than himself, listened eagerly to their replies, and often confounded them by his ingenuity in starting difficulties. This ardour for instruction gave him all the pertinence

ness of a little prattler; but his infantine loquacity possessed a quality of amiable softness, which rendered even his importunity attractive. As he grew up, however, he began to talk less, and at length he was so changed as scarcely to speak at all. He became silent and thoughtful; but amidst his contemplative reveries, a discriminating observer might even then have discovered marks of a studied and judicious reserve, the elements of that circumspection, which, afterwards, became the predominant feature of his character.

In the course of time, he found himself a burden on his aunt, and determined to gain his own livelihood by any honest occupation, however mean; he therefore engaged himself as a supernumerary stable-boy at Versailles.

But this could not satisfy him long; he had snatched a glance at Rousseau, and sighed for independence. Romances had given him an inclination to travel; and with this view, he enlisted with three of his companions for the East Indies, but found himself tricked into the Gardes-Francaises. He was then sixteen. He was ordered to join his regiment at Paris: when he arrived there, his bounty-money and his savings amounted together to 125 livres. He spent this in giving a breakfast to his new comrades, and thus disappeared the little capital of Hoche.

The corporals and drill-serjeants soon distinguished their novice from common recruits. At the end of one month, he had made as much progress as would have been expected from another who had been under discipline a whole year. He was soon advanced into the first company in the regiment: and there, his figure and behaviour eminently distinguished him from the croud. The grenadiers of the Rue de Babylon wished to have him in their company, and Hoche was accordingly made a grenadier.

He

He remarked in his new comrades attainments which he did not possess; and he burned with impatience to acquire them. His manly pride made him feel with exquisite sensibility the inferiority arising from ignorance; and he determined to supply the want of that education, of which the poverty of his family had deprived him. But books are necessary to the acquisition of knowledge, and to the acquisition of books, money. Neither his own pay nor his father's pocket could be expected to furnish him; his resources were in the strength of his arms, and the dexterity of his hands. His days he employed in carrying water for gardeners, and part of his nights in embroidering those caps, in Paris which are called *bonnets de police*.

Several persons who have since been acquainted with him as Commander in Chief, recollect having bought some of this embroidery from him at a coffee-house at which he plied, near *Pont Saint Michel, Rue de la Bourdieu*. His little trade was encouraged by the frequenters of the house, who were struck with the neatness of his appearance, and the modest propriety of his behaviour. His profits were divided into three lots at the end of the week; the first to pay the substitute who mounted guard for him; the second was to be spent in conviviality with his comrades; and the third, though the first in his estimation, was assigned to the purchase of books.

From this time a generous emulation of his superiors in knowledge became the ruling passion of his life; he digested what he read with facility, and had an uncommon talent of extracting from it all the nutrition it contained: and, as his inclination led to the theoretical study of tactics, he was soon enabled to detect the errors of practice, and to suggest improvements and remedy defects by the exercise of his own reflection.

But notwithstanding this earnest prosecution of study and labour, Hoche did not find it necessary to renounce the pleasures of his age. He loved to recreate himself with his friends, who eagerly courted his society; he was present in every party, and was always the merriest of the company. But even in these moments of soldierly merriment, he was uniformly distinguished for decency, sobriety, and every appearance of honourable deportment.

His familiar companions were selected from among the bravest of his regiment. "*The bravest men,*" said he, "*are the best men*" for what security can cowardice afford to friendship; and to the feelings of friendship Hoche was a devoted slave. His fidelity to his attachments possessed all the vehemence of fanaticism. Of this noble turn of character the following is a striking instance.

In a quarrel between the citizens and the military, one of the latter had been assassinated near Paris. Hoche disdained to sleep on his revenge. He went immediately at the head of his companions to the house where the murder had been committed, voted himself commander of the expedition, and completely sacked the premises. This act of insubordination was reported to the commanding officer, and punished with three months imprisonment. Hoche came out of confinement in a wretched condition, without linen or clothes, pale and emaciated. On his arrival at the barracks, his comrades received him with rapture, and vowed vengeance on the informer. But Hoche, though indignant at his treatment, prevented the execution of their threats. "*That would only be committing another evil,*" said he with the most generous indifference, "*What would you do, my friends? Have I not told you a hundred times that mankind are a very worthless race.*" He conferred the most signal marks

marks of favour and distinction on the author of his disgrace, who afterwards served under him in the army.

The scar which he bore on his forehead was the consequence of a similar exertion of spirit, in the challenge of a corporal of the name of Serre who had rendered himself obnoxious to the regiment by his insolence, and by the mean practice of espionage. The duel took place near the mill of Monmartre, December 28, 1788. The corporal received a dangerous wound, from which however he recovered in six weeks, and Hoche was confined to the hospital for a fortnight.

From the two preceding anecdotes, it will be inferred that the embryo commander occasionally subjected himself to the penalties attendant on the infraction of military discipline; whenever this happened, he never waited for the arrival of the corporal who was charged with his arrest, but coolly went himself to fetch the keys of his prison, and voluntarily shut himself up, where he remained quietly till the day of his release.

In the year 1788, the fermentation of the public mind, which usually precedes revolution, became alarmingly visible. The ministers and commanders of the army wished to employ the military in learning a new system of evolutions to withdraw their attention as much as possible from the storm that was gathering in the capital. The known talents of Hoche pointed him out as a fit person to instruct his fellow-soldiers; he gained the approbation of his superiors in his new office, and his elevation to the rank of corporal was the reward of his diligence.

But the independence of his character had nearly deprived him of the station to which he had been raised. To prevent the *Gardes-Francaise* from being infected with the general discontent, they were enjoined to keep within the walls of their barracks; and all communication

munication between them and the people was rigorously interdicted. During this confinement some of the grenadiers thought proper to amuse themselves with dancing. Their officers attributed their mirth to contempt, and threatened Hoche with degradation and the Abbey, unless he gave up the names of the offenders. "You may send me whither you please, gentlemen," replied the corporal, with cool inflexibility, "but I would advise you to enlarge your prisons, if you mean to punish the ridicule to which you are exposed by the unseasonable and capricious severity of your discipline."

This undaunted reply, which, in ordinary circumstances, would have drawn down immediate vengeance, their fears induced them to pass unnoticed.

The *Gardes-Francaises* were the principal means of turning the scale against the court in favour of the people, by their conduct in the memorable attack of the Bastille. They were the principal instruments in giving the irresistible impulse to the Parisians, and it will easily be credited that Hoche was one of the first of his corps in leading on the assault. But this body of men had become too intimately connected with the people to suit the views of La Fayette; who therefore remodelled and subdivided them into three regiments, in one of which (the 104th) Hoche entered with an advance of rank.

One day, on parade at the *Champs Elisees*, Servan, then minister at war, observed a division which distinguished itself particularly by its attentive behaviour, and by the precision of its movements. The minister enquired who was that active young man, who led his company so well. It was Hoche. Servan complimented him before his comrades, and in a few days sent him a lieutenant's commission in the regiment of Rovergue. From this time, we are to follow our hero through a more glorious career; and we shall perceive that

that the expansion of his mind and the progress of his attainments kept pace with the exaltation of his fortune.

In the course of his reading he met with the well known answer of John de Witt, when he was asked how amidst his close attention to state affairs he was not only capable of managing his domestic concerns, but could even find time for recreation. *Ago quod ago* was the reply of the grand pensionary. Hoche was instantaneously struck with the force of these words; and a presentiment of his destiny seemed to have indelibly engraved them in his memory. He reasoned upon the method which they recommend, and he found it to be the shortest to the attainment of his object. He used it as an excellent instrument for quickening the faculties of his mind, to a degree which enabled him to comprehend things with clearness and precision at one glance. By judiciously acquiring the different branches of his knowledge in succession, his progress was rapid and certain: And having once passed over the distance which separated him from others, he was easily acknowledged their equal, and soon became their superior.

By the declaration of war, the army was become the path of glory, and on the 24th of June, 1792, Hoche joined his regiment in garrison at Thionville. Here it will doubtless gratify the reader to introduce a description of Hoche's person and character at the time he entered upon his career of glory.—His stature was about five feet seven inches *. His form was traced with a manly and distinct, but at the same time, an elegant outline; his shoulders were broad but flat; his chest projected with a little of the stiffness occasioned by the carriage of a soldier; his legs were muscular and well proportioned; his hair, eyes, and eyebrows black. The slight scar on the upper part of his

* About six feet English.

forehead,

forehead, nearly over the right eye, far from disfiguring his features, tended to heighten their martial air. His mouth was small, his teeth fine and regular; his physiognomy intelligent, but its predominant character severe; and though an eager desire to render himself agreeable often relaxed it into softness, a discriminating eye could perceive that this was merely an effort arising from his study to please.

His hair was dressed in the same style as when he was in the Gardes-Francaise; the sides very plain and almost strait down, a short flat toupee, and a queue tied close to the head. His mien was grave and commanding, his gait lofty. A lady of the court, who remarked him one day at a review at Versailles, said with some emotion, "They might make a general of this young man." His whole air, indeed, was that of a man fitted to command.

His robust constitution enabled him to endure the severest fatigue; and, as he was extremely temperate, every thing seemed to prognosticate that he would be a long liver.

In ordinary affairs, he meditated long before he came to a determination, which, however, when once taken, nothing could induce him to alter. In affairs of urgency, he saw at one glance what was necessary to be done; and between the determination and the execution of it not a moment elapsed.

From Thionville, during the siege of which he distinguished himself by prodigies of valour, he was drafted to the army of the *Ardennes*, where General Leveneur, in several engagements, remarked with peculiar satisfaction the energy of the young lieutenant of Rovergue, in leading up his company into the very hottest of the battle. But Leveneur was to be indebted to him for more signal services.

The army of the *Ardennes*, commanded by Leveneur, in the absence of Valence, was attached to that

of

of the North, commanded by Miranda, in the absence of Dumouriez. While Valence and Dumouriez were intriguing in Paris, the two armies, then employed in besieging Maëstricht, were in absolute want of necessaries, through the negligence, or rather treachery of their fellow-conspirator Miranda; and Leveneur had the mortification of being obliged to keep troops on the alert, who suffered the privations of famine and nakedness in addition to the fatigues of war. In this embarrassing conjuncture, he commissioned Hoche to scour the country with a regiment of hussars, and to procure subsistence, without delicacy respecting the means, or the consequences. The execution of this charge was entrusted solely to the young officer, who performed it with such order and expedition, that in less than two days the army was abundantly provided.

The events of the month of February had given Leveneur confidence in Hoche; in March the army repassed the Meuse, with the enemy hanging on their rear. The military chest, the baggage waggons, the ammunition, and the wounded, were thought to be in the power of the enemy; but the General ordered Hoche to save them, and he performed it in defiance of probability. From this time he constantly attended Leveneur as his aid-de-camp, sharing with him the mortifying honours of a well-conducted retreat. He fought by his side at Gutzenhown, Neuwied, Vertrich, &c. &c. and covered the evolutions of Dumouriez's army by acts of personal bravery, which should have been devoted to the service of a leader more faithful to his trust.

When the treason of Dumouriez became too rank and evident to be longer concealed, owing to the arrest of the deputies of the Convention, and the publication of the Austrian treaty, Leveneur dispatched Hoche as his confidential agent to Paris, to inform the Executive Council

Council of the difficulties in which the army was involved, and the treachery of its commander. Equally avoiding the extremes of dissimulation and exaggeration, the negociator, while he probed the wound, suggested the remedy, and frustrated the design of the conspiracy. The reward of this service was the rank of Adjutant-General, though his modesty prevented his assuming the title on his return to the army; and he always called himself Leveneur's Aid-de-Camp, whom he loved as a father.

During the jealousies which this disjointed condition of affairs occasioned, Leveneur was arrested; Hoche, confident in his friend, and resentful of his injuries, exclaimed,—“Do Pitt and Cobourg govern France?” This expression having been misquoted, he was accused before the Revolutionary Tribunal of Douay, of having prophesied that “Pitt and Cobourg *would soon* govern France;” but he was acquitted immediately, and flew to rejoin his battalion with as much promptitude, as if he had not been injured by the calumny of a comrade.

With respect to the part which Hoche bore in the defence of Dunkirk, though a leading feature in general history, little beyond the mention of it is necessary to readers acquainted with the great events of the war, and wishing rather for a personal acquaintance with the object of their curiosity, than for a detailed narrative of military exploits. Suffice it to say, that at his arrival he found the disorganization of the troops under his command the most serious difficulty he had to encounter; but, by happily tempering the severity of discipline with the equal familiarity, and the interesting attentions of Republican manners, he restored the garrison to a condition respectable in its own esteem, and formidable to the enemy.

In the memorable encounters in which the English suffered so severely, he had the able assistance of Jourdan,

dan, who was serving his first campaign, and became afterwards so distinguished as General of the Sambre and Meuse. On this occasion, as on all others, it was Hoche's maxim to allow the enemy no respite, and by unceasing attacks to weary their spirits and bring the contest to a speedy termination. But on this, as on most other occasions, his patriotic zeal was traversed by the obstinacy of inferior talents, or the delinquency of apostatizing traitors. Houchard, who afterwards expiated his crimes on the scaffold, disappeared for three days in the very crisis of the campaign, and Hoche was obliged to desist from his victorious career, unsupported by the justificatory sanction of his superior officer. But some idea of his exertions may be formed from the circumstance, that at this time he was for six weeks without the refreshment of a bed or change of clothes, and only snatched his hasty meal or sleep, subject to momentary interruption.

Trulard and Berber, the representatives, who then accompanied the army, and who were witnesses of the patriotic and indefatigable services of Hoche, rewarded them with raising him to the rank of *chef de brigade*. But whilst his brevet was writing out, he was assailed by a second denunciation; from which, however, he again emerged with increased honour, and the augmented confidence of his army.

His present denunciator was Hudry, a *chef d'escadron*, who had some little time before been ordered into arrest by the representatives for a neglect of their commands. Hoche was charged with the execution of their order; and in revenge for this performance of his duty, Hudry resolved to throw every obstacle in the way of his advancement.

The moment Hoche heard that he was accused, he hastened to wait on the representatives, and requested that his new appointment might be suspended, until they had decided upon the charge. He, at the same time,

presented them with a paper containing his defence, which breathed that manly candour, and noble indignation, which are the true characteristics of innocence.

In answer to some reflexions of Hudry on his father's character, he thus expresses himself: "I shall not blush
" to acknowledge, that my father, after having, like
" myself, spent his youth in the service of his country,
" was obliged from poverty to accept a groom's place
" (at the royal stables) for subsistence; in which, how-
" ever, so far was he from acquiring riches, that I en-
" joy, at this moment, the agreeable pleasure of sup-
" porting his old age, out of the appointments which
" I receive for my services. My father, whom a
" coward dares to insult in his advanced age of sixty-
" eight years, was a grenadier. Apply to the section
" of Paris, in which he resides, and it will certify,
" that he is poor but patriotic, and still capable of
" chastising the effeminate coxcomb who presumes to
" degrade his character."

After briefly touching upon the different events of his life, it concludes thus:—"It is by incessantly combatting the enemies of the Republic, and not by flattery and tale-bearing that I shall endeavour to obtain certificates of *civism*. It is my studious wish to present my services wherever an enemy appears; yet am I denounced by a man who could not support the thought of quitting the town and ladies of Dunkirk. If I am accused of treating the subject with too much pleasantry, I answer, that soldiers of my stamp, who prefer the pure and unconfined air of the fields to the mephitical exhalations of towns, and the straw of a tent to the damask of luxurious selfishness, detest, as they ought to do, your gingerbread soldiers."

Before I proceed to state the advice which Hoche gave to the Committee of Public Safety as to the mode
of

of conducting the war, I shall vary the complexion of my narrative by a private anecdote, which throws light on his character, and that of Legendre.

In the early period of the revolution, the theatre was the focus of royalism. Legendre was at the play one night, when the royalists, not satisfied with stunning the audience with their cries of *Vive le Roi*, began to sing counter-revolutionary songs, and commanded the patriots to join the chorus. The dispute was heightened into a battle between the parties. Hoche was on guard at the theatre. His only business was to quell the tumult, without becoming a partizan in the quarrel. Observing Legendre to be one of the most violent, he took him by the collar, and dragged him to the guard-room, whence, however, he was soon set at liberty, on the request of the citizens of his section, which was that of the Cordeliers. The first moment of Legendre's liberty was employed in demanding satisfaction. Hoche's seconds were two of the *Gardes-Francaises*, and Legendre's Danton. But Danton at the meeting declared, that if the duel took place, he would avenge the manes of the victim on the conqueror, and by his patriotic and benevolent interference disarmed and reconciled the combatants. The different occupations in which they were engaged prevented for a time the continuance of their personal acquaintance, and Legendre, when raised to the dignity of a national representative, was still ignorant that the adjutant of the 104th regiment was now a general of the armies of the Republic. But the general, so far from having forgotten the Cordelier, never dispatched an aid-de-camp to Paris without a friendly remembrance to Legendre. The latter, who had totally forgotten the name of his antagonist, knew not to what to attribute these marks of attention from a military man to whom he was a stranger. But at length they met at Tallien's house on the anniversary of the 9th Thermidor. What was

was the astonishment of Legendre, when in the person of this celebrated general, he recognized the features of the subaltern, whom he had called forth on a bloody business but four years before ! The reader will anticipate the issue of the present rencontre, and participate in the sensations which it produced.

But to return from this digression—During two days of confinement, owing to severe illness, Hoche digested a plan for forwarding the catastrophe of the contest, which though neglected at the time, has occupied the attention of the French government at a period far less auspicious to its success.

The following is an extract from a letter, dated October 3, 1793, to a Member of the Committee of Public Safety :—"Since the commencement of the campaign, I have been of opinion that we must fight the English at home. Fifty veteran battalions reinforced by fifty of recruits, from twelve to fifteen squadrons of horse, three companies of light, and forty pieces of heavy artillery, will be sufficient. Six months consideration has confirmed me in the opinion, that the descent on England is not to be treated as impracticable. A brave man, at the head of forty thousand as brave as himself, would appal the effeminate sons of commerce. But, you will say, the means of conveyance ? Cover the sea with merchant vessels, armed in the best manner you can. Renounce all dependence on manœuvre, and the evolutions of naval tactics ; but rely on your swords, your cannon, and your patriotism. If we are attacked on the passage, fire red hot balls."

In reward for his eminent services in raising the siege of Dunkirk, he was appointed by the Committee of Public Safety General of Brigade, and, not long after, Commander in Chief of the intrenched camp of Rossendal, which was almost entirely formed under his own direction.

But

But the ardour of Hoche could ill endure the tedious operations of defensive war ; and it was with the most lively emotion that he received orders to leave his intrenchments, and proceed to the attack of Furnes, Nieuport, and Ostend. His eager zeal to execute this commission, and his generous emulation of Jourdan, who had but a little before raised the siege of Maubeuge, are strongly marked in one of his letters to the war-office. “ My arrangements,” says he, “ are made for the attack of Furnes ; I hope to dine there to-morrow, next day at Nieuport, and in four days at Ostend. May I be as fortunate as Jourdan ! And why not ? For I, too, am a patriot.”

It was during this period of service that Hoche conceived and suggested to the French government the vast project of raising the people, as well as the military, in a mass, and advancing to victory with desperate resolution. The apparent extravagance of this conception probably prevented its being immediately acted upon ; but all Europe knows that it is to its subsequent adoption that France owes her most brilliant and most important successes. The following extract from a letter to the Committee of Public Safety, will shew the sanguine and unceasing perseverance with which he continued to recommend his favourite system :—“ Now we are merely carrying on a war of imitation, or rather a war of puppets ; we have neither plan nor fixed principle. We follow our enemies wherever they appear, without attempting to penetrate their designs, and often fall into the snares which they lay for us. Why should we thus direct our course, only whither they choose to conduct us ? Why do we not mind our own business, without thinking of them ? I have said, and I have written to the Committee, more than two months ago—let us cease to scatter our forces, let us unite in a mass, and march boldly on to victory. Let us not cool in our
“ fervour,

“fervour, nor stop in our course, until the allied
 “armies are overthrown. Twice have they eluded
 “the blow; but the third time they shall not escape
 “the national vengeance. Let no private considera-
 “tion interrupt our progress; the safety of the country
 “depends not upon a paltry hamlet. Let us form two
 “great masses, and let one of sixty thousand men ad-
 “vance upon Tournay, and another of thirty thou-
 “sand, upon Ypres and Ostend. Let us set out from
 “Lille and re-exhibit the scene of Fontenoy. There
 “is no invincible obstacle in our way; Frenchmen
 “stimulated by honour, and the love of their coun-
 “try, will surmount every thing. Let us march, let
 “us march; we must not wait another year to ac-
 “complish the salvation of the Republic.”

I shall pass over the remainder of his actions, till his
 appointment to the Command in Chief of the army of
 the Moselle, which station, distinguished equally by
 its eminence and danger, he attained at the early age
 of twenty-five.

On his arrival at the head-quarters, Hoche had his
 usual fortune to find his difficulties increased by the
 treachery or ignorance of his predecessors. Houchard
 had been in habits of indolence, unless quickened by
 the necessity of retreat; and Pichegru had been driven
 from the lines of Weissembourg, which had been ren-
 dered untenable by the surrender of Mentz, and the
 retrograde movements of the army of the Moselle.
 A young officer, whose penetrating mind the first
 glance of Hoche's physiognomy had hurried into en-
 thusiasm, inserted the following address in the Mili-
 tary journal:—

“Courage! Confidence! Defenders of your Coun-
 “try. Our new General is young as the Revolution,
 “but muscular as the people; he will lead us as
 “Frenchmen ought to be led.”

Hoche

Hoche saw the article, and enquired for the author. It was young Grigny, an officer on his staff. "My friend, you have discovered my heart, and you will not find yourself mistaken. We shall often converse together, and you shall point out to me the men who are animated with sentiments similar to our own." The General acted up to his purpose, for he made great changes in the army, by the promotion of men in whom he discovered ability from the ranks, and by turning the collective talents and virtue of the troops under his command to the best account.

Though we do not profess to give the detail of military achievements, it will be necessary for the illustration of character, to describe the unhappy situation of the French frontiers at the present period. Bitche was the only fortress for the protection of Lorraine and Alsace; and it was on the point of being treacherously surrendered. An emigrant engineer had conducted the Prussians by the defiles of the mountains; the advanced guard of the army was already near the town, the garrison of which consisted of young men of the first requisition. "To arms!" was the general cry; "the enemy is at the gates." The darkness of the night rendered it difficult to recognize the assailants. There happened to be a wooden house without the town on the side of the Prussians. The owner proposed to set fire to it, as a torch to lead the way to victory. The stratagem of the Republican was adopted, and the flames reflecting their light on the mountains, the enemy were received in their descent by a well directed discharge of artillery which defeated them with terrible carnage.

The Committee of Public Safety was particularly anxious for the deliverance of Bitche and Landau. The General of the army of the Moselle had already furnished 15,000 men as his quota for the accomplishment of this object. Besides this, he had been obliged

to send six battalions to the army of the Rhine, and thus had weakened himself considerably. To arrive at the heights of Weissembourg, it was necessary to overthrow 28,000 Prussians who were in the way. Hoche, at first, thought that 15,000 men would be enough to succour Landau; but the Austrians having received considerable reinforcements, he was obliged to send for some battalions from the Rhine. Pichegru refused them. He was, at length, however, obliged to send him some few troops, for the refusal of which he could find no excuse, but they arrived in a state of utter destitution. The whole army of the Moselle was under arms; but, at the moment of action, its general was deprived of the assistance on which he had reckoned. This afflicted but did not dispirit him; his principal concern was for the sufferings of the soldiers. He wrote, on this occasion, to General Laval, in these terms: "Tell the men how much I feel for their fatigues; but it is a sacrifice to their country. I shall always recollect with pleasure the important services which my brethren in arms are rendering to the Republic." But no human interposition could suspend the execution of the plan which he had formed. In a letter to General Vincent, Hoche writes thus: "The day of vengeance is at hand; it will be terrible, I forbid you to correspond with Kalkreutz, except through the medium of cannon and bayonets. The object of his letter yesterday was to know who was Commander in Chief of this army; I shall speedily acquaint him who I am." He writes also to Taponnier in this manner: "My friend, the Republic, founded on the wreck of Despotism, cannot be established till rivers of blood shall have flowed. The defence of our country has been entrusted to us; and every other sentiment must be absorbed in patriotism. Let us avenge Liberty; but in such a manner as to terrify the Tyrants of Europe."

Least

Least the violence of the revolutionary style should cast an imputation on the general sensibility and benevolence of the writer, it is to be observed that Hoche was the most considerate and humane of men; that after a battle, he never sat down to table till he had first visited the wounded, taken cognizance of their accommodation in his own person, and administered all the relief of which their situation was capable.

At this time, he received a letter of instruction from the representatives of the people with the army of the Rhine, written by St. Just, in which he is directed to strike a great blow, and to arrange his movements in conjunction with Pichegru. The activity of the general had already re-organized the army; a military commission sat in judgment on pillagers with inexorable severity; and order, discipline and enthusiasm, conspired to encourage the expectation of brilliant success.

The plan of operations was an astonishing effort of military genius, the merit of which envy attempted to wrest from the legitimate author.

But though victory attended the person of our hero in the opening of his career, the formidable opposition which forty thousand of the enemy's best troops intrenched on the heights of Kayserlautern in such a manner as to have nearly the effect of tripling their numbers, presented to the French, whose numbers were but equal, together with the failure of a division which sunk under the difficulties of a two days battle, unsupported by the immediate presence of their general, for a moment interrupted the concerted plan, and threatened the most dangerous consequences. Hoche, whose eye-sight was so piercing, as to discern objects at distances at which they are scarcely perceptible with glasses, saw the accident, though three miles removed from his own station. He clenched his fist and bit his nails (a convulsive habit to which he was liable under

the influence of vexation or disappointment) and flew to the place where he had perceived the disorder. He immediately changed his design, and issued fresh orders with the rapidity of lightning. The soldiers, animated by his encouraging address, surmounted the obstacles to which they had before yielded, and supported the whole fire of the enemy without wavering. Thus, though accident frustrated the deliberate counsels of wisdom, promptness of change and audacity of execution supplied the remedy. But the night interrupted the progress of their once more victorious arms; and the absolute want of ammunition, which was exhausted by the length of the engagement, seemed to render a retreat necessary. The young general, however, unwilling to lose the precious opportunity, had resolved to carry the formidable entrenchments of the enemy at the point of the bayonet in the morning; but the report of a gun in the dead of the night, in the opposite camp excited the attention of Hoche, who justly attributed it to the arrival of fresh succours. His conjecture was confirmed by tumultuous cries of joy. And here it was that the grandeur of our hero's character seemed to rise above itself. Concealing within his own bosom the chagrin arising from the too formidable inequality between an army newly succoured, and one exhausted by previous exertion, and relying solely on the bayonet, with a calm and chearful aspect, he confessed the propriety of retreating, and gave orders for beating what he ingeniously termed *the retrograde march*. The necessity indeed was irksome, but he feared that some new disaster might prevent him from pursuing the second part of his design. But he retired in the most perfect order, and with a celerity which precluded the enemy from the possibility of harrassing his march. The character, therefore, of Hoche, was not indebted for its greatness to the constant patronage of fortune, but shone with unimpaired splendour through

through the cloud of adverse circumstances, and surmounted the impediments of accident, opposition, or treachery.

A circumstance occurred about the period when these events happened, which strongly illustrates the reluctance with which Hoche bent under the yoke of tyranny. The minister at war had some time before, superseded general Hedouville. Hoche considering the injustice of that act, had resisted it, and declared his continuance highly important to the service. But an order from the Committee of Public Safety, for the arrest of Hedouville, was not to be disobeyed: Hoche, however, took his leave of him with tears and embraces, in the presence of the very agents who came to execute the order. He then had recourse to young Grigny, to consult him on the proper choice of a successor. While the latter was giving his opinion, Hoche regarded him with emotion, and exclaimed, "My choice is irrevocably fixed; I take you for my assistant." Grigny appearing confused at the unexpected declaration, and seeming to revolve in his mind the vicissitude which his predecessor had sustained, Hoche left him for a quarter of an hour to determine on his acceptance or refusal. On his return, he did not wait for an answer, but communicated to him the plans he had formed. By this characteristic feature, we may judge of the equal rapidity and firmness with which the young general conceived and executed his ideas. Grigny was the twentieth on a staff, on which there were four adjutant-generals—But what is rank to a Republic whose staple commodity is talent? Hoche overlooked all considerations of punctilio, and procured the confirmation of Grigny as second in command, by the representatives of the people, Lacoste and Beaudot.

The retreat of the army from Kayserlautern had dispirited the adherents to the French interest, and been

been considered as leading, in its consequences, to the capture of Landau. The Austrians had spread a report that the important post had actually surrendered, and that the French army was annihilated; and, not content with this, officious politicians attributed the reverse to treachery, and consigned the Republic to destruction by the parricidal hands of her own children. In this juncture of affairs, Hoche received two letters, one from St. Just and Le Bas, Representatives of the People with the army, the other from the Committee of Public Safety, breathing sentiments congenial with his own, and giving advice suited to the posture of circumstances, with the exception of this single error, as the sequel proved it to be, of directing his regards to Pichegru as his polar star. The consolatory language of a severe government, not lavish of consolation to its unsuccessful agents, animated the exertions without effacing the chagrin of Hoche. One of his officers appearing to despond,—“Do not be uneasy,” said he, leaning familiarly on his shoulder; “the enemy has escaped me once; the next time, I shall strike a blow from which they will not escape.”

From the time of his arrival at the army of the Moselle he had discontinued the use of tents, as an incumbrance, and a luxurious indulgence unworthy of Republican soldiers. If the army happened to halt at night near a wood, they made a great fire, and lay on branches of trees strewed on the ground; in the morning they burnt their beds, before they continued their march.

At this time, the soldiers looked to the termination of their severe sufferings in the close of the campaign; but their general was of a different opinion, while the relief of Landau remained to be effected. The season was cold, and the troops were ordered into barracks till new measures were concerted. Some of the men

mur-

murmured, and called for winter quarters. Hoche observed a regiment which distinguished itself in the propagation of discontent. In a moment he seized the opportunity of stopping the contagion; he issued an order that the mutinous regiment should be excluded from the honours of the first engagement. The mutineers presented themselves before him with undisssembled contrition; the favour they had to request was to be placed as the forlorn hope. The boon was granted, and they expiated their crime by prodigies of valour.

The mind of Hoche was employed in deceiving the enemy by the appearance of lethargy, while in fact he was taking precautions to prevent the repetition of a disaster; which in the first instance arose from the too great publicity of his designs. To this end, he issued the most singular and apparently contradictory orders: he visited the outposts by day and night, with the most vigilant circumspection; affected to apprehend an attack, lest the troops should contract habits of indolence and dissipation; was constantly on the watch; received all the intelligence which his spies and others brought to the head-quarters, and gave answers and directions in person.

The egotism and jealousy of the different generals had hitherto given advantage to the enemy in partial attacks; but Hoche was determined, by setting aside the distinctions of pride, and forming the whole army into one united mass, to fall on his opponents with a weight which their whole power should be unable to resist. In four-and-twenty hours from the development of his plan, the army was on its march; and a single day sufficed to discomfit the enemy and drive them beyond Wert. From this moment Hoche dated the deliverance of Landau. He then led his army to the plains of Weissebourg, where he gave battle to the re-united forces of the enemy. He defeated them,
carried

carried their redoubts with the point of the bayonet, and compelled them to abandon their position at Hagenau, which the pusillanimous Pichegru had represented as impregnable. Thus was the junction made easy to the army of the Rhine, which effected it after a fortnight's march over the snow, while Hoche was occupied in conflicts, the whole weight of which was sustained by himself alone. Joy sparkled in Hoche's countenance at the meeting of the two armies. "At length we are together;" said he, as he saluted Pichegru. The latter scarcely returned the animated greeting. The trophies of a rival were too hard of digestion. How different was the expression of the two faces at that moment of glory, to which the subsequent misfortunes of our hero are to be traced:

By order of the representatives, Lacoste and Beaudot, St. Just and Lebas, Hoche was proclaimed General in Chief of the Combined Armies, and Pichegru retired to observe in silence the effects of the new arrangement. Though the subject of these memoirs was young, his mind was full of observation, and he was alive to the dangers of glory, and the implacability of jealousy. At his return from the interview, he said to one of his friends, "How phlegmatic this Pichegru is! "His cheeks appear to be marble! Do not congratulate me; if I have laid low the enemies of the Republic, I have by that very act raised up to myself the most powerful ones in the very bosom of the Republic."

The developement of the plan for the campaign was signalized by so rapid a march, as to surprize the enemy in two points, while they imagined themselves in perfect security. But this was only the forerunner of a more decisive effort. The French, after passing mountains the most difficult of access, fell on the lines of Weissembourg, defended by the whole Austrian force, and the Emigrant army, commanded by Condé.

The

The attack was impetuous, and the victory complete; the routed party left their ammunition and their wounded behind them, and nothing but neglect of orders on the part of a French officer saved them from an unconditional surrender. Pichegru was a calm spectator of the battle gained by Hoche, but knew how to appropriate its consequences to himself. On being informed of the issue, he hastened with St. Just and Lebas, to the neighbourhood of Landau; and dating from that place, manufactured one of those parading reports with which the grandiloquent Barrere used to inflame the national enthusiasm to the sinister purposes of a faction. The orator, indeed, declared from the Tribune of the Convention, that "the army had decreed itself to be in a state of permanent victory;" but he did not once mention the name of the man to whom their victories were to be ascribed.

An instance of the peculiar felicity with which Hoche's vivacity turned the most arduous circumstances to account, occurred at Freischeweiller, where, in a very critical moment, he bethought himself of setting up the enemy's cannon to sale. He ran to the front of his battalions, and cried out with an auspicious gaiety, "Six hundred livres for every piece of cannon, my comrades!" The joyous impression of this folly produced the intended effect: "A bargain!" was echoed from every part of the line. Nor were Lacoste and Beaudot, the representatives, averse to fulfilling the engagement of the general, and assigning the prizes to the winners. The 3d regiment of hussars received 3600 livres for six pieces; the 14th of dragoons 2400 for four; the 2d battalion of the fifty-fifth 2400; and the 4th battalion of the Lower Rhine, the same sum, making up eighteen pieces of cannon purchased of the Austrians.

A jeu d'esprit of Hoche at the battle of Wert, one of the most bloody in the annals of war, may be re-

corded as a proof of his sang-froid, to contrast the lively energy of his character, as exhibited in the preceding anecdote. A ball had cut a tree in two under which the commander was on horseback ; the branches fell about him, and wanted but little of crushing him with their weight : he disengaged himself with his usual presence of mind, and without changing his post, continued to give his orders. He had no sooner extricated himself from this entanglement, than another ball killed his horse under him : far from being disconcerted at his danger, he took the horse of a dragoon who attended him, and observed with a laugh, as he mounted, " that the gentlemen on the other side " seemed determined to make him serve in the infantry."

As a proof of the judgment with which he discerned, and the unenvious liberality with which he rewarded merit, we shall enumerate some of the officers whom he promoted—Grigny, Lefevre, Debelle, Grenier, Andreossi, Detré, Hatry, Desaix, Championnet, men who have done honour to the choice of their deceased patron, were among the number of those whom he recommended to civic honours and to military rank.

After a career of victory, in which the Austrians were pursued without relaxation, and the important posts of Germerheim, Worms, Spire, and at last Fort Vauban, surrendered to the French, the two staffs of the army of the Moselle and the Rhine, as well as the armies themselves, came to be again separated, after having performed the services which had imposed the necessity of their junction. At a meeting, to settle the proportions and the mode of division, Pichegru asked, " What officers he should take with him ? " Hoche replied drily, " I leave that entirely to your own choice ; " conscious, undoubtedly of his own ability, though his rival might take

take the best, to train up others by the influence of his own example and instructions

But the Committee of Public Safety, in their own characters not chargeable with pusillanimity, though misled by the envious suggestions of Pichegru, refused to enter into the views of Hoche, to effect the passage of the Rhine, and strike terror into the very heart of Germany. Notwithstanding, however, the predominant counsels of the Republic, tending to the quiet possession of what they had achieved, seemed to exempt our hero for a time from the perils of military vicissitude, he still had to encounter the wiles of an enemy, who hoped to seduce by stratagem the valour and the patriotism which they could not conquer by force of arms.

It was supposed that female blandishments might weaken in a young mind the energy of that devotion to the cause of Liberty, which had been proof against the pecuniary and honorary temptations so fatal to the virtue of many in the catalogue of French commanders. In the course of a rapid march for the purpose of taking possession of the Palatinate, Hoche having put himself at the head of the advanced guard, the headquarters remained in the rear. The general was expected to supper in a small town, on the invitation of one of his own officers. On his arrival, he sat down to a magnificent entertainment, at which it was contrived that he should meet a lady, as if by accident, of uncommon beauty, heightened by the attractions of the most voluptuous dress. The master of the house, with a polite attention, which appeared to have no particular meaning, placed the insidious enchantress by the side of the principal guest. It would be impossible to imagine any illicit artifices, ambushed indeed under the specious outside of innocence, which were not played off against the young Cyrus during the repast. The charms of rational and elegant conversation

versation relieved by fallies of facetiousness, or interestingly interrupted by the eloquent expression of looks and gestures; every provocative, which could stir the appetite of passion or of reason; all the modes of allurements, hackneyed or novel, were set in array against the constancy of the hero. Some of the company entertained themselves with the process of the contest, and predicted the defeat of the stronger party by an anticipating smile. But Hoche was neither so unapprehensive as to fall through ignorance; neither so distrustful of himself, as to seek refuge in the rudeness of immediate flight, nor so confident as to yield to the carelessness of enjoyment. With an air of absence and profound meditation, he sat out the entertainment, without appearing to notice the attractions or dangers to which his mind was anxiously alive; and he assumed the manners of indifference, while his thoughts were interested deeply in the passing scene. He was engaged to pass the night at the house; but how great may we suppose the surprise of his host to have been, when, without previous notice, at two in the morning, he ordered his horses to be saddled, mounted immediately on their arrival, in spite of the hour, and fatigues of the preceding day, and rode sixteen miles to his head quarters, to enjoy the refreshment of sleep, secure from the hazard of seduction from his duty!

But we are not to infer from the apparent coldness of his temper, as exemplified in the preceding anecdote, that his professional habits had diminished his natural taste for the tranquil charms of domestic life, and the pleasures of female society. At one of the national festivals, celebrated at Thionville, he became acquainted with a girl of fifteen. His inclinations were fixed, when, on better acquaintance, he found that purity of mind and feminine delicacy of character to be real, the appearance of which had at first attracted him. He made application to the family through the inter-

vention

vention of a friend, whose intimacy allowed him those opportunities, which his own transient acquaintance, and that with the young lady only, would scarcely warrant. But a difficulty occurred, which Hoche had not foreseen, in the remains of those prejudices, which Republican principles had not yet eradicated from Republican minds. Citizen Dechaux, the girl's father, who was a store-keeper to the army, was alarmed at the honour intended to his family by the first in command. One morning he waited on his future son-in-law. Citizen Dechaux was introduced, and Hoche received him with a cordial salute. The short conversation that ensued contains the story of his marriage.

Dechaux. My wife and I, general, scarcely know how to receive the honour you design us. Our daughter is a good girl, but she was not born to be a general's wife. We might think of marrying her to a volunteer, or perhaps a lieutenant; or if our good fortune equalled our desire of doing well for her, we might possibly even aspire to get a captain for her husband.

Hoche. I am a Republican General, but not long since I was only a serjeant.

Dechaux. The manner in which we live, and the genteel appearance we make, may probably have excited an idea that our circumstances are more affluent than they really are.

Hoche. You do me injustice—I do not want a fortune, I want a wife.

Dechaux. That is generous. But I trust you will attribute the liberty of the observation I am going to make to its true motive, the anxious concern, and even suspicious caution of a parent in what regards his child's happiness. It is customary, when an offer of marriage is made, for the friends of the lady to make some enquiries respecting the circumstances and connexions of the suitor.

Hoche.

Hoche. The information you can want on that head is short and simple, and no one can furnish it more satisfactorily than myself. I was born at Versailles: my mother died in child-bed, but my father is still living, and resides at Paris. My name is Lazarus Hoche, and I have been in the army from sixteen.

Dechaux. But my daughter is too young; not quite fifteen.

Hoche. So much the better; I wish for a pure and pliant mind, the habits of which I may so model as to comport with my own: your daughter seems to possess the qualities of which I am in search; and the conclusion of the whole matter is, Citizen, that I see very plainly I am to be your son-in-law.

Dechaux. Citizen-General; you have taken your father-in-law by assault; so I surrender at discretion.

Hoche. I have heard very patiently all you had to say; and now, for my part, I have but one question to ask: Is your daughter's heart at liberty?

Dechaux. I believe so.

Hoche. Then I only request one hour's conversation with her, to be assured of it from herself.

The last condition was granted; and the interview sufficed to convince the suitor not only of the disengaged state of the young lady's heart, but of her disposition to receive his addresses with the favour and frankness their ingenuous and disinterested nature merited. A few days were sufficient to settle the preliminaries, and the nuptials were celebrated under the most encouraging auspices.

But the very circumstances of his domestic happiness only exasperated the acrimony of those envious denunciations, which his persecutors were now beginning to pour in upon him. Hoche was deeply affected by the malevolent misrepresentations, to which a union of the purest affection had exposed him; and we

we find him treating them in a letter to one of his friends, with a mixture of becoming sensibility and honest indignation : “ One must love one’s country well, to continue in office in these times. What ! shall jaundiced envy dare to pursue me into the very bosom of my family ? Were I a carpenter or any other obscure mechanic, I might have been happy ; but, arrived at one of the chief commands of the Republic, it seems I am never to taste any happiness. Wretched intriguers ! Is the virtuous character to be always your sport ? What have licentious debauchees to do with my union, whose impure dispositions, prevent them from forming such a connexion. Not to talk of beauty—have I not wedded myself to virtue ? Are not the parents of my spouse undoubted patriots ? Great God ! if I must always endure such sufferings, grant that I may speedily return to my native dust.” Even the public esteem, which might have consoled him for the sufferings inflicted by too powerful individuals, was diverted from its proper channel by the misrepresentations of St. Just, in the tribune of the Convention, where the achievements of Hoche were put in requisition to amplify the panegyric of Pichegru. But it must not be omitted, for the honour of the English Newspapers, that they were the only public medium, through which the military operations, mutilated in the French journals for party purposes, were related with fidelity, and ascribed to their true authors with historical veracity.

Hoche, however did not fail to express himself in a letter to the Committee of Public Safety, with the frankness of conscious integrity. “ I intreat you to examine my orderly-book, and my correspondence, and compare them with those of Pichegru., that you may ascertain who commanded at Wert, at the battle of Weissembourg, and the recovery of
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“ the lines ; who planned the capture of Lauterbourg, of Germerheim, of Spire and Worms ; the march to Landau, the attack on the defiles of Auweiller, the march to Kayserlautern and to Kreutznach.” But not contented with challenging the inspection of his papers, he actually transmitted them to the Minister of War, by one of his officers, to whom he said on taking leave, “ If you should be asked any questions about me at Paris”—“ What shall I say, General ?” “ Why you may say—all that you know.”

But the unquestionable pre-eminence of his character, which ought to have been his protection, served only to expose him to the shafts of calumny, and mark him as an object for proscription. His real offence was having hurt the pride of the most supercilious of men, St. Just. As the misunderstanding between the Representative and the General, was productive of serious consequences to the latter, and its origin has been variously represented, we shall insert the two most probable accounts of it. The one furnished by an officer of character, is, that St. Just, wishing to engage Hoche in Robespierre's party, offered him fifty thousand crowns after raising the blockade of Landau, not as an avowed agent of administration, but under the mask of a tribute to his personal worth and patriotism.—Hoche, knowing the danger of quarrelling with a man of St. Just's influence, accepted 50,000 crowns, but deposited them in the army chest, instead of appropriating them to himself ; and this delicacy was the ground of the persecutions he afterwards suffered.

But the truth of the foregoing statement may be doubted, upon very reasonable grounds. Few will be inclined to believe that Robespierre and St. Just, made use of pecuniary bribes, or the arts of insinuation, to swell their partizans. They were acquainted with a
much

much shorter, and more expeditious instrument of conversion than corruption. It is more probable, therefore, that the prejudice arose merely from the arrogant temper of St. Just, who had assumed to himself the title of Envoy Extraordinary to the Army, and by this pretension domineered over his colleagues, Lacosts and Beaudot, who were simply Representatives, and opposed their salutary reforms. Finding the suppleness and time-serving spirit of Pichegru in direct opposition to the inflexibility of Hoche, St. Just probably thought the former a fit instrument to execute his will, and therefore made him an object of decided preference; while the virtue of the latter pointed him out as a mark for vengeance, unconnected with personal altercation, or the offensive refusal of proffered favours.

At the time of the junction of the two armies, mentioned in the course of this narrative, St. Just wished to have given the chief command to Pichegru; but in this instance, he was forced to yield to the pressing instances of his colleagues. The fortunate result of the nomination had no tendency to reconcile St. Just to his disappointment; and the following circumstance contributed not a little to augment the irritation of thwarted self-sufficiency. Five days before the battle in which the lines of Weissebourg were recovered, St. Just and Lebas required from Hoche the communication of his plan; the latter, recollecting that the attack on Kayferslautern had miscarried in consequence of the project having been divulged, was resolute in the refusal of their demand; "I only require," answered he, "to be the depositary of my own secret, and I pledge myself to victory." But though the event justified his obstinacy, it added to the motives for his persecution.

From the period to which we have brought the history, Hoche saw by the orders of the Committee of Public Safety, that though the army might follow

the impulse of victory which he had communicated, as it actually did, it would be under another leader. But though his advice was uniformly rejected, and his removal determined, he was too popular for his enemies to venture it, but under the plausible pretext of nominating him to the command of the army of Italy. In consequence of this appointment, he was ordered to repair to Nice; and the affecting reflection that he was quitting the companions of his glory, was only alleviated by the hope of serving his country more effectually in another station.

On his arrival at Nice, his first object was to consult his maps, and lay plans for the campaign, which he expected to open. He was sitting at a frugal supper of bread and olives, without having taken off his boots after his journey, when he saw an officer enter the room. Supposing him to have been a subaltern come to receive his orders, Hoche graciously invited him to sit down to table, which was refused. The stranger acquainted him with his mission, which was to put him under arrest. "Excuse me, General," said Hoche coolly, "I did not know your business; I was going to bed; I am fatigued with travelling, and my conscience will not disturb my repose: I cannot attend you before to-morrow morning."

Hoche had no other idea on his journey to Paris, than that his arrest was the consequence of a mistake, and that he should be returned to his functions with more distinguished honour. On his entrance into the anti-chamber of the Committee, he saw St. Just, and applied to him for justice. "You shall have all that you deserve," replied the proconsul, with malicious joy, and the insulting tone of victory. On his return from the committee room into which he had entered, he gave his own directions for lodging Hoche in the prison of the Carmelites, whence he was transferred to the Conciergerie. Our hero had carried some books

books with him to prison, among which were the Epistles of Seneca, and Montaigne's Essays. With the former he was particularly pleased, and with the sentiment, *Non sumus in ullius potestate, cum mors in nostra potestate est*. He called it, emphatically, the complete code of fortitude.

In the prison of the Carmelites, he had made acquaintance with the *Citoyenne* Beauharnais, since wife of Buonaparte, by whose means he gained intelligence of the assassinations which were perpetrated every day under the form of justice. At the Conciergerie, he was a spectator of the horrid scene. Scarcely a day passed but some of his fellow prisoners familiarised him to the idea of death, by taking their leave on their condemnation to the scaffold. Montaigne's Essays, which he had borrowed, having been previously in the possession of a person similarly circumstanced, opened of themselves at the chapter which had been most read, intitled, *Que c'est philosopher, que d'apprendre a mourir*. But when Hoche had sufficiently studied this lesson, and digested the sentiment into a principle of conduct, he threw aside his books altogether, renounced the usual seriousness of his character, and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the present moment, company, the *badinage* of female society, the pleasures of the table, appeared to him to afford a more certain antidote to melancholy, than the precepts of philosophy, which once imprinted on the mind, were only to be weakened and rendered inefficacious by the tedium of repetition. Thus the man whose sobriety not all the allurements of power and fame could shake, in a situation in which the generality would have been reduced to despondency, became the devotee of mirth, personal indulgence, and thoughtless dissipation.

This passing intoxication of the mind, however did not in the least diminish the firmness of his cha-

racter; and though he was become a philosopher of what is commonly called the Epicurean School, he was still a philosopher, both in his own behaviour, and in his observations on the manners of others, in circumstances of strong interest, illustrating the predominance of nature and habit over hope and fear, in situations the most unexpected, in apprehensions the most formidable, and under the impending terrors of premature death. A very rich money-jobber, the accumulations of whose life seemed to increase the necessity of self-denial in the very means of living, was perceived by Hoche concealing some assignats and pieces of money from the goaler, in his shoes, which were likely from his present case to become the inheritance of the executioner—"What do you intend to do with that money, ill-fated and ill-judging man?" said Hoche. "Don't speak so loud." Replied the other.

At the Conciergerie, there was a poet in the room with Hoche, who persecuted him for several days with solicitations to hear a tragedy read, which the votary of the muses had written. After much evasion, the general consented. He was soon tired, and it was not very long before he was asleep, though the poet was too much engaged with self-admiration to advert to that accident. At the conclusion, he shook his auditor, and asked his opinion of the piece. "I think," replied Hoche, "that the Committee of Public Safety have sent you to torment me before my time."

Hoche had nosegays brought him every day into the prison: one morning, when he expected to be carried before the Revolutionary Tribunal, he gave a rose to each of the persons who were likely to accompany him. His trial was put off; but his fellow-prisoners were all condemned, and all died with the rose, which he had given them, in their mouths. But the ninth of Thermidor arrived, and was to be noted in the calendar of suffering humanity for the cessation

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of human butchery, and the release of such a man as Hoche.

On his discharge from the Conciergerie, Hoche was reduced to the necessity of soliciting the arrears of pay due to him at the time of his arrest, to defray his unavoidable expences; at the very time when Pichegru was living in opulence, at the head of an army which was wasted by famine. While Hoche was waiting in the antichamber of the Committee of Public Safety for his restoration to public functions, Pichegru was overwhelming the friends of the Republic with injuries, and countenancing its enemies with his credit and influence. He was now as jealous of Jourdan as he had before been of Hoche; and as Carnot was as much gratified by his docility, as he was incensed at the inflexibility of our hero, he assisted him to the utmost in the gratification of his revengeful passions. Pichegru's partizans were still loud in their praises on account of the conquest of Holland; but the mask is at length removed, and history will inform posterity that the modest Jourdan contributed as much to purchase him laurels at an easy rate by the battle of Fleurus, as Hoche had done at the lines of Weissebourg.

After some months application, Carnot consented that Hoche should return into the service, and be entrusted with the command of the army on the coasts of Cherbourg. But the malice of this appointment must not pass unobserved: his genius could no longer display the fertility of its resources against an enemy, with whom it was glorious to contend; but was to be exercised in a conflict of Frenchman against Frenchman, in which the acquisition of glory would be measured by the virulence of domestic discord, and the horrors of civil war. Hoche felt the severity of his fate, though he was resolved to produce good out of evil; and could not help frequently exclaiming, "How
"happy

“ happy are they who have only Prussians and Austrians
“ to conquer !”

The campaigns in La Vendée had been conducted by several generals in succession, who had produced no other effect than to irritate and inflame the wound, and exasperate the miseries resulting from misguided fanaticism. On the arrival of Hoche, he found bitterness in the hearts of all parties, and the sword and the dagger in their hands. - But he felt no fears for the suspicion of *incivism* he might excite by the proposal of conciliatory measures in the room of that system of extermination, so contrary to true policy, which the dangerous posture of circumstances had induced the existing government to adopt. He undertook the introduction of milder, though not less vigorous measures, on his own responsibility : and in his delineation of a plan for the campaign, he told the Committee of Public Safety, that “ a few proclamations would produce a better effect than the most formidable park
“ of artillery.”

But the penetration of his intellect was not blunted by the benevolence of his temper. He knew how to distinguish the hireling agents of England, and the ambitious organizers of bigotry and rebellion, from the misled but honest multitude, who were the dupes of their priests, and the victims of misfortune and ignorance. To the latter he offered pardon and fraternity ; to the former, in his own emphatic words, *la capitulation des bayonettes*.

Hitherto, pillage, conflagration, and murder, founded on the barbarous law of reprisals, had been the accredited practice of the Republican troops. To repress these excesses was a leading feature in the new commander's system, and he sought the means in the establishment of unremitted discipline.

The troops had been kept in cantonments, for the purpose of conciliating them by the permission of those
irregular

irregular indulgences, which custom had in some measure sanctioned.—Those who know the difficulty of reconciling the inveteracy of habit to the unpalatable innovations of reform, will be able to calculate the resistance which Hoche had to overcome, in introducing the system of encampments, against the united interests of sloth, drunkenness, and concupiscence.

The district which he had to reduce to obedience, being rugged, woody, and thickly intersected with hedges, afforded the enemy against whom he had to contend, the means of protracting even defeats into victories, and left little hope to reiterated success but in reconciling the minds, as well as dissipating the forces of the discontented inhabitants.

The insurgents, as might naturally have been expected, made use of the advantages which nature and art had given them, to pillage for their subsistence, to surprise the detached parties, and annoy the main body of the government forces, and secure themselves in the positions they had strength enough to occupy. Influenced by these considerations, the Committee of Safety, had ordered the demolition of the hedges, that the army might have room to act with effect, by ensuring a gloomy tranquility at the expence of general devastation. Hoche was to have been the agent of this system: but relying on more generous means of success, he determined to use his authority with the administration to suspend the execution of the project. By representing how dearly peace would be purchased, if the domestic comforts of the peasantry were invaded, if the features of the country were to be mutilated, and the means of husbandry destroyed, he saved the peaceable and the misled inhabitants from sharing in the punishment of the guilty, and became the mediator of contending parties, as well as the conqueror of armed antagonists. It is true, indeed, that this conduct exposed him to the calumny even of those, whose property

property and security he had ensured ; he was denounced as the protector of royalist robbery, and the promoter of civil war ; but the philosophical benevolence of his motives, and the practical utility of his line of action, confirmed him in his design, and carried him through opposing difficulties : the inclosures, on which the future prosperity and cultivation of the country depended, were suffered to remain ; and the war, by which it had been desolated, was brought to a happy conclusion by wise and well-timed measures.

The next remarkable circumstance attending the conflict in La Vendée, was the genius of fanaticism and religious bigotry, which exasperated personal animosities, and corroded the wounds of civil dissention. Half-witted statesmen and generals, who owe their promotion to factious intrigue, usually find the small talents they possess so inadequate to the difficulties of their situation, that the violence of their spirit, exceeding the limits of their power, organizes and perpetuates disaffection, and erects the standard of rebellion into a trophy of victory. They call for conformity and submission ; they exclude for opinion, and proscribe for principle. But the policy of Hoche was as wise and moderate, as it was faithful and vigorous : he enjoined the troops under his command to respect the prejudices of the unenlightened, to accompany the devotions of the superstitious, and to mollify the implacability of the bigotted. He taught the soldiers, that they were not the proper judges whether the religion of the people was true or false ; nor did he interfere with the religion of the priests, but when their persons had become obnoxious to his displeasure, by their having poisoned the minds of the laity against the civil government and military service of the country.

Another distinguishing trait in the performance of those functions, to which our hero was at present appointed

pointed, is to be found in the degree and mode of discipline, which he enforced upon the troops submitted to his controul. Far from giving encouragement to the system of confiscation and free quarters, which substitutes the cowardly brutality of the ruffian for the more generous qualities of the military character, and degrades an army into the scourge of the defenceless, rather than the terror of the enemy, he issued the most positive injunctions in favour of a scrupulous attention to the rights of property, a punctual observance of pecuniary engagements, and a rigid abstinence from invading the personal liberty or the moral purity of families.

But his system of discipline, guarding against extraneous offence, and conceived in the spirit of conciliation, was not founded in the gloomy temper of tyranny, or in a mechanical adherence to the regulations of professional formality. The severity of Hoche was extorted by occasion, was temporary in its continuance, justified in its motives, and apparently repugnant to his feelings; his affability and indulgence were the result of disposition and habit, uniform in their tenor and consistent in their aspect, unwillingly suspended, and joyfully restored. The irregularities by which strangers were the sufferers, were unrelentingly punished; the accidental excesses, which neither impeded the service nor disgraced the cause, were not the more frequently repeated, because they were easily pardoned.

When officers, whose petty self-importance was centered in the exercise of authority, represented it in terms of ludicrous solemnity the heinousness of trifles and the criminality of social enjoyment, Hoche would occasionally express himself thus—"You would not have soldiers drunkards; neither would I: but consider the limited gratifications of a camp, and the hardships of the military life. We ought

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“ however to discourage the immoderate use of wine,
“ when its effects are perceivable in the neglect
“ of duty: then commences the crime, and then the
“ necessity of punishment.”

His reprimands were never tinged with the vulgarity of abuse, and therefore, seldom gave offence. When it was necessary to repress disorder; the disgrace of punishment was disguised under respect to discipline. “ I tell you” said he to one of his officers, “ that I do not choose to degrade the troops which I command,—I wish them, on the contrary, to be “ honoured, because I hope to render them honour-
“ able.” While he regarded with magnanimous indifference the frequent denunciations which were made against himself, he repelled with indignation every unjust or frivolous complaint of the conduct of his soldiers.

“ I do not countenance any irregularities,”—Said he, by way of final answer to a representative, who transmitted to him the complaints of a certain administration—“ but whatever faults they may have, “ I should wish that the defenders of the country did “ not find so many accusers among those for whom “ they daily risk their lives.” By pursuing this course of prudent and judicious mediation, he succeeded in impressing both soldiers and citizens with the necessity of mutual esteem. Whilst he compelled the misfed inhabitants to pay homage to the Republic in the persons of her defenders, by a vigilant and well tempered discipline, he reconciled the latter to those habits which were best calculated to procure their respect and affection.

In a war, in which an engagement was too often little else than reciprocal assassination, he thought that to re-establish order and discipline in the republican army was not merely to vanquish the enemy, but, what was better, to disarm him. By sup-
repressing

pressing every species of vexation, he extinguished the most powerful and specious motive for reprisals. By restoring confidence and security to the unfortunate peasantry, he detached from the banners of a sanguinary fanaticism, all those whom personal injuries and fears had alone armed with the sword of vengeance, and reduced the desperate remainder of its partizans to the undisguised profession of robbery and assassination.

It is true that in effecting these salutary objects, he was obliged to act the part of a superintendant of police, rather than that of a general at the head of a powerful army. How many are there, who would have considered this humane and prudent policy, as a degradation of their functions; and who placed in the same circumstances would have preferred to acquire the false reputation of great warriors, by the criminal prolongation of all the miseries of civil discord! Hoche, on the contrary, proud of the humble sphere to which he had voluntarily descended, frequently made it the subject of jocular remark in his letters to his confidential friends. In one of these letters he gives the following description of the circumstances in which he acted. "I am carrying on what is called the War of the Chouans. Pleasant Gentlemen, these Chouans! You never know where to find them. Be sure to send me the earliest intelligence of the towns you take by assault, of the fortresses you storm, and the illustrious victories you gain. For my part, as soon as I shall have taken a priest, or a chouan. I shall transmit you the detail of the operation, with all the pompous minuteness to which the celebrity of the exploit may reasonably lay claim."

But at the instant when Hoche expected to reap the fruits of a system which combined lenity with firmness, and employed intimidation only as an in-

strument of humanity, he had the mortification to see all his hopes blasted, by a premature proclamation of general amnesty, issued by the National Convention.

The reign of terror was followed by an æra of affected moderation; and to the stern decrees of a committee without mercy, succeeded the indiscriminating condescensions of a government without vigour. The energy of conscious dignity, and even the prudence of self-defence, appeared in danger of being lost in the cant of unconditional amnesty, and amidst the machinations of insidious negociators. The decisive plans of Hoche were thwarted by the illusion of impending pacification, and the Committee of Public Safety condescended to treat with Charette and Stofflet, as with independent and equal powers. Hoche incessantly urged, that however flattering those hopes of peace might be, to which from his own better information he gave no credit, the preparations of war would be found to be its best guarantee; but malevolence was active in calumniating his motives, cowardice mistrusted his calculations, and imprudence disconcerted his plans.

In the mean time, the audacity of the opposite party overleaped all bounds: they rose in their demands, they appeared publicly in the badges of disaffection and sedulously avoided the arrangement of the definitive articles. If difficulties arose in the negociation with the chiefs of the rebellion, the embarrassment was not lessened by the conduct of those colleagues, whom the Representatives of the People had appointed to assist the Military Commanders in their deliberations. Contradiction and indecision, rivalry and treachery, were the alternate modes of the moment: and at once to promote and explain the dilatory and prevaricating intentions of the Royalist party, an English Fleet appeared off the coast, to cover the descent

descent of an emigrant army, at the approach of which the Chouans insidiously decided for peace.

The arrival of the crisis was grateful to the impatient mind of Hoche. The continuance of depredations had afforded an excuse for keeping the military force on foot, the efforts of which were reserved for the destruction of the invading enemy, and not for the effusion of blood in provincial skirmishes. Quiberon was the depot of ten thousand emigrants. Hoche had undertaken six months before, that if they dared to make an attack, they should never return. On the first intelligence, he set out from Rennes to keep his word. Not having been able to prevent their landing, he left them in possession of the fort at Quiberon, and the peninsula it commands, intending, to use his own phrase, "to catch them like rats in a trap." They favoured the success of his designs, by wasting their time in consecrating churches, while he was preparing arrangements of the most auspicious boldness, which the cold science of engineers taxed with the imputation of temerity. The assault of the fort *Penthevre* announced to the brave Republicans the completion of their labours; the magnitude of the attempt appeared to exceed the united powers of valour and fortune; but the column of general Menage by a happy stratagem substituted the standard of liberty for the odious flag of despotism, and made way for the main body under Hoche, who, with Tallien as his representative colleague, entered the fort among the foremost of the troops. The emigrants, who had an opportunity of saving themselves by flight, attempted to regain the English ships; but strange as it may seem, they were not permitted to attain their object. Those of them who were compelled to surrender to their injured countrymen, were not however devoted to the horrors of military execution; their defenceless condition

tion pleaded for them, and they were consigned to the tempered severity of the civil tribunals for the merited punishment of apostacy. At this moment the feelings of humanity were apparent in the conduct and expressions of Hoche. "Would to God," exclaimed he, in contemplating the fate of young Sombreuil, "that such men as he, could be made to burn with our sentiments of patriotifm !" Not that he pitied the recreant *émigré*, but the unfortunate and misguided Frenchman. Immediately upon this important rout, Hoche suggested to the Committee of Public Safety the plan of an expedition to the isles of Jersey and Guernsey, the rejection of which might afford occasion of surprise, were it not that Louis the XVIIIth was at that moment incorporated with that Committee, in the person of Boissy d'Anglas.

At this time the Royalist party founded its only hopes on La Vendee. Charette had once more raised the standard of rebellion, for the purpose of occupying the attention of the interior, to favour a second debarkation of the emigrants.—Hoche acquainted the Government with the dangers that awaited the country; the exclusive direction of the counter operations was in return entrusted to him, and he was promoted to the command in chief of the army of the west.—On this appointment he exclaimed, "Now I am at liberty to conclude this unfortunate war." He went to Paris to arrange his plans; Barras approved them, and carried them through with his colleagues of the Directory. And now it was, that general Hoche, relieved from the opposition by which he had hitherto been thwarted, displayed the talents of a great Commander, the policy of an able Negotiator, in a word, the genius that was to restore tranquillity to La Vendee.

The first effect of his operations was the capture of Stofflet, who was punished with death; in less than a month,

month, a hundred other Chiefs underwent the same fate. Three and thirty days afterwards Charette was led to the place of execution amidst the cries of *Vive la République*. On his return from Paris Hoche assured his friends, that he would extinguish the rebellion in three months; and he accomplished his promise in little more than two. Thus was a contest, which had cost so much blood and treasure, and tarnished the reputation of so many able commanders, terminated at last with an almost miraculous promptitude—affording an admirable proof of the daring efforts of a vigorous genius, to whom the science of negociation became at one glance, as familiar as that of war. But the last act of Hoche's administration in these parts was the most illustrious; to the blessings of peace he added the boon of liberty; he declared the harrassed country of La Vendée to be no longer in a state of siege, and replaced the military by the constitutional regimen.

At leisure to revolve the means of waging an offensive war, Hoche repaired to Paris, to consult on his long meditated project of a descent on England. A Secret Committee was held at the house of one of the Directory; the Minister of the Marine and the General had consulted together for the investigation of their resources, and Truguet presented an extensive and decisive project. But rapidity of execution was an important feature in the plan, and money was an article of as much scarcity as necessity. For ever hampered by financial operations, the Directory determined to confine their expedition for the present to Ireland. The ardour of Hoche's genius would scarcely have brooked this restraint, had not (says the French writer) the modesty of his patriotism induced him to acquiesce.

On the arrival of general Hoche at Brest, he met with his usual fate in the counterplots of concerted Royalism.

Villaret-

Villaret-Joyeuse was eager in promoting whatever could disgust the Republican spirit of the Commander; but that very spirit served to unmask the traitor, and at its instigation he was discharged. This merited, but too tardy deprivation of office, explains the subsequent conduct of Villaret, in taking part against the Directory, the Minister of Marine, and against Hoche, when he was afterwards thrust into the Legislative Body by a faction, to represent the would-be King of France under the title of the Representative of the People.

But the removal of Villaret-Joyeuse from the command of the naval forces little contributed to forwarding the expedition. The obstinate refusal of the pecuniary supplies which the service required, the insolence of the Marine officers, who affected to have nothing in common with the land generals, and to receive their orders solely from the Minister of Marine—circumstances such as these may convey some idea of the embarrassing situation in which Hoche was placed. His courage, however, was augmented, in proportion as the audacity of traitors increased; his capabilities seemed to multiply; he superintended and accelerated the operations in the arsenals at Brest, he hastened the equipment; the happy effects of his activity were every where felt, the impulse of his energy was every where acknowledged. In his ardour to restore his country to that rank which she formerly held as a Naval Power, there was no branch of nautical science which did not engage his attention, and his progress was so rapid that rear admiral Bruix frequently declared that “one year’s experience would make general Hoche the best Minister of Marine that ever France had.”

This lively solicitude for the prosperity of the navy was also testified by Buonaparte in a remarkable manner. The conqueror of Italy, in the midst of his

his most splendid triumphs, never neglected the interests of the French Marine; he superintended the arsenal of Toulon on the very theatre of his conquests. Hoche, like Buonaparte, was alive to the importance of this object to the national interests; and desirous of emulating without interfering with Buonaparte, he directed his ambition to the enterprize in which he could best serve the Republic. Nor can any thing be more honourable to the character of both these heroes, than that Hoche, finding his rival in possessor of the continental laurels, transferred his own exertions to another element, and fought, in his own phrase, to consolidate, by the deliverance of the seas, the peace which Buonaparte was giving to the Continent.

While we are on this subject, it will not be uninteresting to insert the following declaration of our hero to admiral Morard de Galles: "I esteem Buonaparte, he has declared for the liberty of his country, and his victories have fulfilled his engagement. For this reason when I was last in Paris, I supported him with all my influence against the Royalists. To lead me aside, and to discourage him, the last mentioned gentlemen nominated me to be his successor with the army of Italy. But I interested myself for his continuance, because he deserved it; it is but fair to defend a man in the interior who has fought so gloriously on the frontiers, and in the enemy's country." At another time, as Hoche was reading the account of the victories in Italy in the papers, he was overheard to mutter with peculiar emphasis, "Fortunate young man, how I envy you!"—"Envy!" exclaimed one of his friends, who was near him, with a smile of surprize,—"Yes," replied Hoche, "I certainly did speak of envy; but I never thought of jealousy."

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But about this time a circumstance occurred, which must not be omitted in these memoirs. About a week before the accident which we are going to relate took place, the Minister of War had apprized Hoche, that an emissary had set out from — with a commission to attempt his life. Far from taking precaution against the attack of which he had been forewarned, Hoche had thrown the letter carelessly into a corner of his *escritoire*; and its contents were not known to the officers of his staff, till after the means of precaution would have been too late. One evening, as the general was coming from the play, at Rennes, accompanied by the generals Hedouville and Debelle, a pistol loaded with ball, was fired at him. To be more certain of his aim, the assassin had rested his hand on a railing; but it faltered at the moment of execution, and its tremulousness rendered the attack ineffectual. The unalterable serenity of Hoche afforded a striking contrast to the anxious perturbation of his friends: the first appearance of the assassin, when he was brought before him, produced not the least emotion in his countenance; but when the miscreant threw himself on his knees, with suffocating sobs, and confessed his guilt, while he implored compassion, then a sensible alteration was perceived in our hero's features, he was forced to turn away his head and conceal his tears. "Unhappy man, have you a wife and children?" The question was answered in the affirmative, and the fact appeared to be, that want had tempted the wretch to the undertaking, and that a hundred louis which had not yet been paid, were to be the bribe. Hoche on this information sent five-and-twenty louis to his wife for her present occasions; he made the assassin sit for his picture to a painter at Rennes, and was often observed to dwell in profound meditation on the portrait.

Delays

Delays and difficulties, increasing in number and in magnitude, seemed to threaten a total failure of the preparations for the invasion of Ireland; nor would the great effort which approached so near success, have been attempted, had not the prevailing influence of Hoche's talents and character overpowered the clamour of disaffection, and shamed the terrors of cowardice.

When the wind was favourable there was a scarcity of anchors, and an unequal distribution of provisions. The spirit of revolt in the navy, was gaining on the army: three companies of grenadiers, dissatisfied at not receiving their pay regularly, refused to embark. Hoche felt the danger of such an outset; he ordered the grenadiers to be removed to a distance from Brest, and to be excluded from the honours of the enterprise. An hour afterwards, he heard that their officers had expostulated with the companies, and induced them to change their minds. But the general persisted in his first orders, and the gates of the town were shut against them; they passed the night in the open air, without shelter or provisions. "I will have no mercenaries with me," said Hoche. The effect of such a speech on French soldiers may be easily conceived. They threatened to murder the two movers of the revolt; they supplicated, they procured intercession, they expressed their penitence, and promised better conduct: Hoche, affected by so noble an expiation, permitted them to resume their station, and they never afterwards incurred his displeasure.

At length the fleet was ready; the troops embarked, and the general himself in the frigate *la Fraternité*. The armament consisted of fifteen thousand men. The wind was favourable on their leaving harbour; but no sooner had they got into the open sea, than it became contrary. The signal for sailing, by either an accidental or concerted circumstance, had been given too late for all the ships to sail in company. After the first night, Hoche found himself separated from his comrades,

and they were ignorant of the destiny of their general. The fleet, however, appeared off the coast of Ireland; in the course of ten days almost every vessel had been in sight of the promised shore; but the life of the expedition was absent, and the time of action was wasted in useless conference. In the mean time, Hoche's frigate, after having been pursued by the English, reached the coast of Ireland, where he himself expected to have found the fleet waiting for him. But he learnt with bitter regret the disorder and separation that storms and bad counsels had occasioned. Had any part of the armament remained off the coast or landed, he would have attempted a Republican *la Vendée* in Ireland at the most imminent personal hazard; but totally without means of making an impression, he found himself obliged to direct his course homewards, and forego the flattering expectations he had formed, with a keenness of disappointment, and an exacerbation of spirit which he had never before experienced.

New dangers, in addition to the storm, awaited the return of *la Fraternite*. She was chased by two vessels of the enemy, but eluded the pursuit under cover of the night. The next morning at day-break, the crew were surprised to find themselves in the midst of the English fleet. Arrangements were immediately made for sinking the Republican flag, the manifestos, the papers of every kind. But the wind became so high, and the sea so rough, that the English, intent only on self-preservation, carelessly suffered the *Fraternite* to pass as one of their own frigates; she continued her course till the evening, and then steered for the coast of France.

The *Fraternite* came to anchor off the isle of Rhe, in the midst of a dark and boisterous night. Impatient to reach the opposite shore, Hoche embarked in one of the frigate's boats, accompanied by his friend citizen Shee. The officer appointed to conduct them

them was totally unacquainted with that part of the coast; and after wandering four hours in the most frightful uncertainty, the boat suddenly struck upon a low rocky point. The crew immediately leaped over board, and gained the land in safety. Shee, who was at the moment attacked by a severe fit of the gout, which deprived him of all motion, begged that Hoche would follow their example, and leave himself to his fate. "No," replied Hoche warmly, "we have sworn that death only should separate us, and nothing but death shall force me to quit you." Hoche took him upon his shoulders, and carried him to a miller's house at a little distance, where they passed the night upon some straw.

It would not be easy to describe the feelings of Hoche on his return from so unfortunate an expedition. But the hope of speedily renewing the attempt supported his spirits; he hastened to Paris, to lament the past, and to plan for the future with his friend Truguet, minister of marine. "The Directory," said he, "has appointed me to the command of the army of the Sambre and Meuse; that army is disorganized; but as I know the elements of which it is composed, I shall be able to restore it to harmony; in the mean time, do you refit the navy as expeditiously as possible; write to me when your arrangements are completed; I will then solicit to be superseded in the command in which I can be of least use, and will quit the banks of the Rhine for the sea coast."

It was under two distinct characters, the administrative and the military, that Hoche was to appear in the army of the Sambre and Meuse. This army had not been so disastrously circumstanced in the campaign of the year 4, as malevolence had represented it to have been; but the alteration in its interior arrangements had been very remarkable. Deprived of its leader Jourdan, of Kleber and Bernadotte, it had remained

mained in a state of inaction, more inglorious than the reverses it had sustained; and the reparation of the disadvantages which had occurred in that interval was not the least difficult office with which this true Republican had been entrusted. The army would long ago have fallen into anarchy, and a total confusion would have taken place, had there not been such men as Championnet, Lefevre, and Grenier, who were still attached to the staff. The first object of Hoche, on his arrival, was to second the endeavours of these sincere patriots, by meliorating the condition of the common soldiers; but he knew that the eye of discipline and reform on their superiors was necessary to the success of this benevolent purpose. He limited the expences and the ostentation of the officers; and thus secured the decent and regular behaviour of the men under their command. But he had still a more difficult duty to perform. The Directory, on the report of two commissaries of the first character (Hoftz and Poissant), had determined to adopt a new system with relation to the conquered countries; namely, to concentrate the interests of the people and the army in the same hands, and thus to improve the situation of both; and to attain this end, they invested Hoche with a general administration. Our hero, however, already entrusted with the care of a great army, knew not how to find leisure for the government of an extensive country, the customs of which were varying at every step. He therefore organized a central commission of five members, to which all civil concerns were to be referred, which was no sooner established than its salutary effects were felt in every quarter.

But it is now time to turn our attention to active operations. Having in less than two months prepared all his arrangements for opening the campaign, he paid a visit to all his staff officers, to assign them their respective departments of service. He

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entertained the highest expectations from their avowed attachment to the republic, and their affectionate friendship for himself; nor were his hopes from the soldiers under the command less confident: "Never was there," said Hoche to his generals, "a finer, braver, or better disciplined army than that of the Sambre and Meuse: a general ought to be proud of having the command of such an army, because with it he is sure of soon commanding the armies of the enemy." Of the impression which the decisive character of Hoche made upon that enemy, the following passage from an intercepted letter from Mallet du Pan, is a striking testimony: "As to the campaign on the side of Germany, the French government places its most essential reliance upon general Hoche, who commands the army of the Sambre and Meuse. This officer, formerly a serjeant in the *Gardes-Francaises*, is a fanatical, violent, enterprising, active, diligent Republican; in a word, a true jacobin."

Hoche's plan was to pass the Rhine at the bridge of Neuwied on the 29th Germinal. On the 24th he had notified to the enemy the cessation of the armistice. The Austrians artfully announced to the French general a fresh suspension, concluded in Italy, and requested him to delay hostilities till the official accounts should arrive. But Hoche pleaded the orders of his Government; and in his dispatch to the Directory observed, "Whatever may be your decision, I think it my duty to represent to you, that the army being 86,000 strong, I can carry 70,000 at once to the banks of the Danube, and constrain the enemy to an honourable peace." On the 27th the left wing of the army took a position opposite Cologn, and on the next day passed the Sieg. The rest of the army, stationed in the neighbourhood of Andernach, was ready to pass the Rhine. In the night a messenger arrived from the Austrian general, Kray,

Kray, announcing the approach of an officer, charged to treat for a cessation. The night elapsed, but the officer did not arrive. On the 29th at three in the morning, the advanced guard, commanded by Lefevre, passed the bridge of Neuwied, and formed in the plain. The army followed. Hoche was employed in marshalling the troops, when general Kray sent to ask "if he would meet the officer whom he had announced at Neuwied?" The request was granted, but the mode of adjustment being disputed, the negotiation ended. The principal French officers had scarcely time to repair to their posts, before a general fire commenced on the part of the enemy, and this denouement of the conference confirmed the suspicion of Austrian treachery. But the surprize of this attack was in the end of little avail to the Austrians; Hoche, after some preparatory manœuvres, ordered a charge with the bayonet, and the route was as complete as the pursuit was unrelenting. At this moment, while his orders were executed with the rapidity of lightning, Hoche was issuing them with the calmness of philosophy in the midst of danger and carnage. "That the word of command may be well obeyed," said he, "it should be properly comprehended. Do you understand me? Repeat the substance of what I have been saying." If the officer had misconceived any particular, he repeated the instructions without testifying the least impatience. But the moment they were completely understood, he would exclaim with the most impatient eagerness, "set off, run, fly;" then taking up his perspective, he traced the execution of his orders with the minutest attention.

A fact occurred in the course of this action, which it would be unpardonable to omit, as it is highly illustrative of the affectionate admiration in which he was held by his army, and the enthusiastic valour to which

which the obscurest individuals were roused by his example.

A soldier, whose arm had been shattered by a shell from a howitzer, was on his way to the hospital in rear of the army. In passing the bridge of Neuwied he was met by several of his comrades, who began to commiserate his sufferings. "Po! Po!" said he, with the most chearful indifference, "this is nothing at all,—go on my friends—all is well,—we have at our head a bold b——r who fights like a mad-man." Proud of the wound which he had received under the eyes of Hoche, he experienced no other regret, than it had obliged him to retire from the field.

After this defeat, Hoche had put himself at the head of the light troops, that he might not be deceived as to the course the enemy might take. Near Dierdorff, he found an Austrian *corps de reserve*, much superior to his own force. He was therefore obliged to wait in a wood, where he was exposed to great dangers, for the arrival of his infantry and artillery; but in the end he made himself master of the spot, and the army took possession of Montabour, Dierdorff, and Altenkirchen.

Thus terminated the battle of Neuwied which cost the Austrians at least a thousand killed, eight thousand prisoners, twenty-seven pieces of cannon, seven standards, five hundred horses, and an immense quantity of baggage and warlike stores of all kinds.

At the close of this memorable day our hero's conviviality, in spite of his fatigues, was as animating as his temperance was exemplary. When pressed to indulge, "Who will dare be irregular," said he, "if I am temperate? On the contrary, every corporal will feel himself intitled to gratify his licentious appetite, if I am known to give a loose to my own."—In the midst of supper, during which his

cheerfulness had been intended to encourage new exertions, he fell suddenly into a fit of pensiveness; and the company were much surprized to see him start from table: "Go on with your supper," said he,—“my business is to provide you a dinner to-morrow.”—He went to his retirement to digest new plans.

In his dispatches, he was accustomed to speak largely as to the merits of his officers, though he touched but lightly on his own individual exertions. In his bulletin of the engagement just related, contrary to his usual practice, he had spoken rather vaguely of the capture of seven standards.—“The army has taken seven standards.” General Lefevre wrote to him with a delicate simplicity, “I took seven, so that in all there are fourteen.” “No,” my friend,” replied Hoche, “there are only seven standards, and there is but one Lefevre.”

As the subsequent brilliant operations of the present campaign afford nothing interesting to the reader who examines into the philosophy of character, we shall only add that the army was pursuing its successful career to the extinction of the Austrians, when an express arrived from general Berthier, announcing the Italian armistice, and inviting Hoche to drop hostilities. Nothing could be so honourable to the victors in the meridian of their triumphs as the joy with which this intelligence was received. Hoche, in his reply to Berthier, says with incomparable modesty, “We shall never forget that we owe peace and its invaluable consequences to the efforts of the Italian generals and army.”

On the suspension of hostilities, Hoche's attention was again directed towards Ireland. He therefore quitted the Rhine, and went to Holland to secure the co-operation of the Dutch fleet; from thence he proceeded to Paris to receive instructions from the Directory; then back to the Rhine, where

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he embodied a corps, which was to march to Brest. Even money, the great impediment to the success of the French, was procured by the economy of Hoche and the exertions of Truguet. Now, therefore, there was but one hope for the enemies of the Republic. This was to set the Royalists of Paris to vociferate against the march of the above-mentioned troops to Brest, as by their near approach to the capital tending to overawe the National Representation. On the arrival of Hoche at Paris, which he visited in his way to Brest, whither his levies for the expedition against Ireland were bound, the Directory, in the present important conjuncture, fixed upon Hoche, and appointed him Minister at War. Carnot, whose hypocrisy had procured him the character of wisdom, and whose only genuine sentiment was hatred of Republicans, discovered the true character of Hoche, and determined to make him the first sacrifice. The proper parts were distributed to the Counter-revolutionists, according to their different talents: One, in a pompous declamation, enquired into the age of the Director Barras, and the Minister of War; another argued against entrusting the Government with the application of the public money; another harangued on the insidious topic of the march of the troops. Thus did the Royalist faction get possession of the Legislative Body. But the Republicans, though aware of their danger, were not discouraged, but conspired against conspiracy. At the moment of rallying, Hoche met with the Representative of the People *Marbet*. Their concurring opinions introduced them to each other. Marbet asked Hoche, "if he would contribute to the triumph of the Republic?" Hoche replied, "I depend on some men of spirit like yourself in the Legislature, and on the three Directors who are with us; but I wish to

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"urge the necessity of prompt exertion : Louis the
 "XVIIIth will be on the throne in a fortnight, if
 "we do not strike at once. The regiments which
 "were destined for Ireland are fortunately at the dis-
 "posal of the Directory, and if they receive orders,
 "they will be in Paris the day after to-morrow."
 "Are you sure of your men, and that your officers
 "will not be alarmed at the phantom of a mounte-
 "bank representation? Will they incur the danger
 "of the scaffold for the execution of your orders?"
 "I am secure of my officers and my soldiers," replied
 Hoche: "they will respect the Legislature, while it
 "is on the side of liberty; but a Legislature, which is
 "not democratic, will never carry the army."

It was not, however, without a severe struggle with
 himself, and until he thought all other remedies im-
 practicable, that Hoche determined to use that of
 military force. There was nothing which he so
 much dreaded as the establishment of a military go-
 vernment; he could not hold royalty itself in greater
 abhorrence. He knew that with those veteran legions
 who had subjugated the tribes of Gaul and Germany,
 Julius Cæsar subverted the feeble remains of Roman
 liberty; that the same soldiers who had conquered at
 Dunbar elevated Cromwell to the protectorate; and
 that with the same army which had brought Charles I.
 to the block, Monk found it an easy matter to place
 Charles II. upon the throne. He had carefully traced
 the progress of the examples which history affords of
 military domination, and he wished to prevent his
 country from ever experiencing its influence, by in-
 cessantly reminding his soldiers, that they were also
 citizens. As to himself, he was frequently heard to
 say, with peculiar emphasis, on this trying occasion,
 "I will vanquish the counter-revolutionists, and when
 "I shall have saved my country I will break my
 "sword."

The

The three Directors who rallied on the side of the Republic, were Barras, Rewbell, and La Reveillière-Lepaux; but it was Barras with whom Hoche consulted most confidentially on the subject of the impending conspiracy. The measures, which actually took place on the 18th Fructidor, were concerted in the conferences between these two men; what might have been done, had the conspirators resisted, remains buried in the tomb of Hoche and the breast of Barras.

Hoche had quitted the scene of his glory in the army, to participate in the dangers of the interior administration; his reward was the hatred of some, the coolness of others, and the unfounded apprehensions of all. Carnot observed the good understanding between the three Directors and the Minister at War, and therefore denounced the latter to his inveterate enemy Pichegru. Hoche would have stood his ground, had personal danger been his only motive for apprehension; but he knew that in his own defeat the downfall of the Republic would be involved, and therefore he quitted Paris for the army, to allay the fears of the well-intentioned, and to repel the calumnies of the disaffected; leaving to Barras and his colleagues the execution of the intended plan, unless the spirit of the turbulent could be tranquillized, and the security of the established government be peaceably consolidated.

At this time the general visited his family at Metz; in the mean time, general Cherin announced to the army, that their general, preferring the society of his comrades to the cabals of administration, was about to return; and the intelligence was received with the most lively demonstrations of joy. But on his appearance at head-quarters, a visible alteration in his person and manner was perceived. Contrary to his usual custom, he had brought his wife and child with him,

as if he was flying from his persecutors, and clinging to those few connexions which remained faithful to him. The tide of unpopularity, except in his own army, had set in against him; and it affected his health and spirits for this reason solely, that it precluded him from serving the public according to his wishes. His habit of body became thin and wasted; his complexion cadaverous; he had a dry and incessant cough, and a difficulty of breathing, which were alarming symptoms to his friends, though they did not apprehend immediate danger.

In the mean time his bodily infirmities were increased by the uneasiness of his mind, at seeing the progress of the Royalists, in the speeches of Dumolard, Bourdon de l'Oise, and Troncon Ducoudray, in the presidency of Dupont de Nemours, and in the revived Commission of Inspection, consisting of Pichegru, Vaublanq, Thibaudeau, Emery, Delame, Rovier. The impeachment on the ground of the too near approach of the military was still agitated, and a Tribunal was beginning to be formed, of which Thibaudeau proposed the organization. Hoche took infinite pains to refute these sinister imputations, not from the personal interest that he felt in them, but because he was feelingly alive to the perilous situation of the cause. His health suffered in an increased degree by his application to business, and the anxious state of his mind; but on the anniversary of the 10th of August, he seemed to have recovered his usual tone. He delivered a most patriotic and eloquent address to the army, and presided at the entertainment given on the occasion. He, and the other officers gave toasts, expressing the most elevated sentiments of Liberty and Military enthusiasm. The last toast was given by a General of a Brigade:—"Buonaparte! May he—"
Hoche interrupted him—"Buonaparte! Short!" his name includes everything.

The

The mind of Hoche was so entirely employed on the probable issue of affairs at Paris, that nothing but the emaciated state of his bodily strength would have prevented him from repairing to the capital. He, however, sent his confidential friend, Cherin, with dispatches of advice to the Directory, and Cherin was appointed to the command of their guards.

The fatigue which he underwent, in visiting all the parts of his army, and detaching chosen bands into the interior, to secure the result of the momentous crisis which was then impending, exasperated his disorder to a degree that was no longer tolerable. His temper became extremely irritable; he consulted every one upon the means of recovery, but he followed the advice of none. In vain did his physicians represent the indispensable necessity of repose, and urge him to unbend his mind from the cares and bustle of a camp, in the midst of his family at Metz. "The army," replied he, "is my element; and inactivity is to me a real torment. I am convinced that the only effect of removing from the head quarters would be to increase my illness. I could not reside at Metz but in a state of the most racking anxiety; and I should be obliged to dispatch two or three couriers a-day to bring me intelligence absolutely necessary to my existence—if I should go two thousand leagues off, the Republic would still follow me."

At length, at five in the morning of the 21st fructidor, a courier arrived with the news of the 18th. Hoche instantly threw himself out of bed, and flew to communicate the glad tidings to the officers of his staff. "Vive la Republique," exclaimed he, "come and rejoice with me, my friends; the Republic has triumphed, and the traitors are no more." Hoche's physician entered his room, just as he was reading the dispatches to a crowded auditory. "Doctor," cried Hoche eagerly, "I do not want you any more;

"more; my cough is cured, and here is the remedy." But it appeared to be the aggravation: for he instantly turned pale, the muscles of his face seemed relaxed, and a general tremor overpowered him. Yet his illness did not interfere for a moment with his zeal for the public welfare. He distributed the particulars and the proofs of the conspiracy through the army, and gave himself up to the care of securing the victory of the 18th. "In politics, as in war," said he, "it is of very little importance to gain a battle, if its success be not secured by subsequent operations. To sleep by the side of victory is to tempt her to fly from you; she is a female, and exacts unremitting attention."

In order to divert his mind from business, he was persuaded to go to Frankfort fair with some of his friends; and he promised to devote a week after his return to the regimen of his physicians, before he set out for Strasbourg, to take the command of the army of the Rhine. At Frankfort he met with a German physician, who gave him a prescription from which he entertained great hopes. He thought himself cured, and returned to Wetzlar, where his family was, a day before the rest of his party. But on the 30th Fructidor, finding himself worse, he sent for his own physician at midnight, on whose arrival he was standing at an open window, leaning on one of his friends, and gasping for breath. He recovered, however, for a short interval, signed official papers, and gave directions with respect to his troops, but he was himself sensible that the hand of death was on him, and his friends were not without suspicions, to which the report of the surgeons after his death gave additional force, though not certainty, that his illness was the effect of slow poison.

At this important crisis of his fate, Hoche regarded his situation with a mien of dignified composure, and
advanced

advanced to the barrier of human hopes and fears with the firm step of unapprehensive tranquillity. The recollection which principally supported him in the review of his past mortifications, and in the prospect of approaching dissolution, was the settlement of La Vendee, and the conviction that the affections of that department had been restored to the Republic by his own judicious and benevolent exertions. But the vigour of a sound mind could not restore health to an emaciated and perhaps corroded body; the asthmatic affection increased, his countenance was continually changing; a cold sweat ensued, and a numbness of the extremities. "Farewel, my friends, farewel—desire the Directory to take care of Belgium, farewel. O my country! O my comrades!"—These were the last words he spoke*.

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* As the following letters from General Debelle to the French Executive Directory contain some particulars relative to Hoche's death, which are not mentioned by his Biographer, the translator thinks there is no apology requisite for introducing them in this place.

Debelle, General of Division, Commander in Chief of the Artillery of the army of the Sambre and Meuse.

Head Quarters at Wetzlar, Sept. 20, 1797—5 A. M.

Citizens Directors,

The news which I have to announce to you must afflict every friend to the Republic. General Hoche, whose health has for some time been injured by fatigue and labour, has expired in my arms after a crisis of six hours. This unexpected loss deprives government of one of its most zealous defenders, and leaves the army without a Commander. Until you shall have given orders respecting his successor, General Lefevre, the oldest General of Division, will take the command. My pen refuses to write any more. I mourn for him as a brother and a friend; the country ought to mourn for him as one of its most firm supporters.

DEBELLE.

He died at Wetzlar at four in the morning of the third complimentary day of the 5th year of the French Republic.

His remains were conveyed from Wetzlar to Coblentz with a profusion of funeral honours that might be expected from an army who loved him almost to adoration; nor were the inhabitants of the

II.

Citizens Directors,

I wrote you this morning in tears, and in the midst of an afflicted family. I could therefore give you no account of the circumstances which have deprived France of General Hoche.

Gifted with a strong and ardent constitution, though with an uncommon sensibility of nerves, General Hoche experienced only lively and ardent sensations. The least sentiment affected him beyond expression; and the revolution only served to display this disposition in a more perfect degree.

Thrown on a wide théâtre, Hoche exerted all his faculties, to fill with dignity the part which he was to play. The misfortunes which he experienced during his imprisonment under the reign of Robespierre, the extraordinary fatigue which he underwent in pacifying the department of the West, the failure of the expedition against Ireland, and the dangers which he ran by sea; the accusation pronounced against him from the national tribune by the late conspirators; the ardour with which he attempted to overthrow them—all these circumstances combined exhausted his strength, and about a month ago returned, with alarming symptoms, a cold and complaint in the breast, which he first experienced at Brest, and had too much neglected. All the assistance of art was unavailing to his recovery.

For seven or eight days, he experienced, from time to time, fits of suffocation, which passed off with exceeding difficulty and uncommon agony; the smallest motion threw him into one of those fits. Yesterday about ten in the evening, after passing a pretty calm day, and even transacting some business, his sufferings were redoubled. A dreadful fit of suffocation deprived him of the use of his senses, and, after six hours of indescribable agony, he expired in my arms.

His body will be opened to-morrow to destroy the report in circulation, of his having been poisoned. On the day after to-morrow, his body will be conveyed from Wetzlar with all due pomp, towards Coblentz, where he will be interred by the side of General Marceau, in Fort Petersburg.

Health and Respect,

DEBELLE.

inter-

interjacent district, less forward in testifying their sorrow for the untimely fate of a commander with whom the rights of conquest never superseded the claims of humanity. The bells of every village through which the funeral passed, responded in slow and solemn peals, to the plaintive music of the escort. On approaching Braunsfels, it was saluted with a general discharge of artillery; and on entering the place it was received by the reigning prince at the head of his troops, who fired several volleys over the coffin. Similar honours were paid to it by the Austrian garrison of Ehrenbrestein; the governor and his staff officers joined the procession at the advanced posts, and accompanied it to the edge of the Rhine, through a double row of Austrians and Frenchmen, and amidst repeated discharges of the canon of the fortress, which did not cease firing till the funeral had reached the opposite bank, and the last sad solemnities had been discharged by the French garrison of Coblenz. The corpse was deposited in Fort Petersburg, by the side of the gallant Marceau; for the removal of whose body from the place of its first interment, Hoche had contributed only three days before his own exit, the sum of 1200 livres. Six cypress trees, immediately planted on the spot, point out the repository of their kindred ashes to the inquiring traveller of future times.

We shall here introduce the discourses pronounced by Generals Lefevre and Championnet over the grave of Hoche, as they will furnish the reader with an undeniable testimonial to his character, as it has been represented in the preceding pages. They exhibit not the studied panegyric of the perhaps enthusiastic biographer, but the artless transcript of the feelings of men who, from their military rank, and their intimate intercourse with the illustrious object of their regret, must be the best qualified to form a correct estimate of his public and private worth. Lefevre, by a

few masterly touches, executes a striking outline; Championnet supplies the particular features, and presents us with a complete portrait.

DISCOURSE PRONOUNCED BY GENERAL, LEFEVRE:

“ MY DEAR COMRADES,

“ Death, whom we have never at any time
“ dreaded, now presents himself to our eyes in a form
“ truly terrible. At one stroke, has he cut off youth,
“ talents, and virtue.

“ My dear comrades, Hoche is no more ! Cruel
“ destiny has wound off the measure of his days ; and,
“ in one instant, there remains to us no more of him
“ than the recollection of his virtues, and the picture
“ of his achievements. Let us consecrate this fleet-
“ ing moment to pay him the last tribute of our pro-
“ found affliction. Let the noise of the war-like
“ thunder, which accompanied his numerous triumphs
“ inform the whole world that in him humanity has
“ lost an advocate, victory one of her children, the
“ country one of her defenders, the republic a sup-
“ port, and all of us—a sincere friend.”

DISCOURSE PRONOUNCED BY GENERAL, CHAMPIONNET.

“ Amidst the plaintive accents which are heard
“ on every side, may I be permitted to raise my voice,
“ and to console, by the expression of our most pain-
“ ful regret, the illustrious shade of the hero who
“ has just been taken away from us.

“ Dead is that youthful warrior in whom Liberty
“ delighted to behold one of her firmest supports !
“ Neither

“ Neither youth, nor glory, nor the ardour of our
“ affection, were able to save him from the fatal blow.
“ Virtue, genius, talents—all have been devoured by
“ relentless death. What have I said! The truly
“ great man never dies; his descent into the tomb,
“ is but the commencement of his immortality.
“ Borne upon the wings of his numerous triumphs,
“ the name of Hoche will descend to the most distant
“ posterity. It will spread his glory over a hundred
“ different regions. The plains of Weiffenburg,
“ the walls of Landau, the rocks of Quiberon, the
“ banks of the Rhine, are the eternal monuments
“ which will testify to future ages his elevated courage
“ and profound conceptions.

“ Military talents were not the only endowments
“ nature had distributed to him. An able conciliator,
“ as well as a consummate general, he extinguished
“ that horrible war, which, lighted up by fanaticism
“ and fuelled by the gold of our enemies, so long
“ desolated our finest provinces. He restored to the
“ country thousands of her straying children, made
“ happiness revisit abodes whence she appeared to be
“ for ever exiled, and thus deservedly acquired the
“ grateful appellation of pacificator.

“ Hoche devoted his whole existence to the cause
“ of Liberty. In vain did the several factions which
“ successively attempted to overthrow the republic,
“ labour to attach him to their interest. Inaccessible
“ to any other sentiment, than that of the love of his
“ country, he repulsed their offers with disdain, and
“ feared not to deserve their hatred. Persecuted and
“ calumniated by them, to persecution he opposed an
“ unshaken constancy in his principles, and to calumny
“ his life, his actions, and the esteem of his brother
“ soldiers. But recently, during the terrible crisis
“ which menaced our constitution, we have seen him
“ invariably pursuing that line which he had traced
“ out

“ out for himself, despising the clamours of traitors,
“ and affording to the government an assistance which
“ powerfully contributed to frustrate their iniquitous
“ projects.

“ So many splendid achievements, and eminent
“ services for the public welfare, which would seem
“ indeed to imply a much longer career than that of
“ the hero whom we deplore, have justly entitled him
“ to the gratitude and admiration of our remotest
“ progeny.

“ We who have lived with him, have many other
“ motives to augment the grief with which his pre-
“ mature fate has afflicted us. The father, rather
“ than the chief of his soldiers, he was inces-
“ santly occupied with the means of relieving their
“ wants. Already bearing the seeds of dissolution in
“ his bosom, and a prey to frequently unsupportable
“ torments, he remained deaf to the pressing solici-
“ tations of his alarmed friends, and denied himself
“ that repose which might have prolonged his days.

“ To all the virtues of the warrior, in him were
“ united all the estimable qualities of the private citi-
“ zen. He was a good husband, a good father, a sin-
“ cere and generous friend.

“ Comrades, weep—weep for a kind father, who
“ was worthy of all our affection. Intermingle your
“ tears with those which friendship makes me shed
“ upon his grave. You owe him the most sincere la-
“ mentation ; he bore you constantly in his heart ; he
“ breathed only for you and his country, and his latest
“ moments were consecrated to the assurance of your
“ happiness. *O my country ! O my comrades !*
“ were the last words which were uttered by his
“ dying lips.

“ Doubly inauspicious day ! [the second compli-
“ mentary day] was it not enough to have snatched
“ from us one of our most distinguished warriors, the
“ young

“young and intrepid Marceau! Was it necessary, a
 “year after, when our hearts were still bleeding with
 “that cruel wound, mercilessly to tear them afresh
 “by ushering in the death of our illustrious chief?”

“Revered shade of a magnanimous hero! behold
 “the profound consternation which thy loss has scat-
 “tered amongst us. Receive consolation from the
 “regret which thou hast left to us, and enjoy the
 “assurance that though thou no longer livest, yet thou
 “shalt not cease to be useful to thy country. Thou
 “hast bequeathed to us grand examples which we
 “will endeavour to imitate; and if we must march
 “to new combats, the enemy shall recognize the sol-
 “diers, who have been accustomed to vanquish under
 “thee.”

The tears that plentifully streamed from the eyes
 of the soldiers during the delivery of these discourses,
 have communicated the permanency of truth to the
 colouring of friendship. As they were about to bid
 him a final adieu, a grenadier advanced from the ranks
 with an air of melancholy respect, and, throwing into
 the grave a crown of laurel, exclaimed, “Hoché! I
 “present you with this crown in the name of the
 “army.” But a circumstance which occurred during
 the procession from Wetzlar, affords a still more af-
 fecting instance of the sincerity of the general affliction.
 During the last day’s march, on leaving Montaubaur,
 one of the soldiers fainted away. It was discovered
 that the poor fellow had not tasted any food for two
 days. On recovering, being pressed to declare the
 reason of this singular abstinence, he burst into a flood
 of tears, and his only reply was, “Alas! how much
 “he loved us.”

In exemplifying a few particulars of our hero’s cha-
 racter, which may have been but slightly touched upon
 in the preceding part of these memoirs, we shall begin
 with

with observing, that this reply while it conveys the most exquisite eulogium upon the deceased general, supplies us at the same time with the true cause of that unbounded devotion with which he was cherished by his soldiers. Their attachment to Hoche did not originate merely in their admiration of his superior talents, nor in the common contagion of military glory; it was rather a sentiment of gratitude for innumerable instances of personal benefaction, expanding into general enthusiasm at the view of his unceasing solicitude to promote the happiness of the whole. "To gain the affections of your soldiers," said Hoche, "you must adopt the same means, which you employ in private life—if you would have them love you, you must shew that you love them." Regulating his conduct by this maxim, he thought it was impossible to be too attentive to the means of conciliating their friendship. He fared, in every respect, as they did; he underwent the same fatigues and suffered the same privations; his generosity towards them was boundless; his purse was common to all; and to relieve their necessities, he was frequently known to leave himself destitute.

There were not wanting men who regarded this noble exercise of liberality as an unjustifiable profusion; and who often reminded him of the opportunity which his situation, improved by the rules of ordinary prudence, afforded of pecuniary aggrandizement. But his good humoured repulses of such admonishments, gave additional proofs of the benignity of his disposition, and convinced their authors how hopeless were the task to infuse a passion for riches into a mind actuated by a love of real glory. "You might have been worth two hundred thousand livres more," observed one of his relations, "if you did not thus throw away your money to every one that chooses to ask for it."—"I should have been a million poorer," replied Hoche,

Hoche. "A million! pray where have you such a sum?" "In the purses of my friends," answered he, "where I should find it this very moment, had I occasion to make a collection among them."

The effect of this unexampled beneficence upon the minds of his soldiers was visible in every operation in which he engaged: The most powerful of all desires, that of self preservation, lost its wonted influence when it came in competition with the execution of his orders; and, conducted by Hoche, there was no enterprise, however arduous, upon which they would not venture with willing zeal, and with the fullest assurance of success. They were unwearied with fatigue, because he was indefatigable; they found it no longer difficult to practise the lessons of temperance; for even the austerities of his character acquired a charm in their eyes; and all were proud to imitate the example of their chief. A wise government will certainly always view with extreme jealousy so intimate a connexion between the soldier and his general. But in the hands of Hoche there was no danger that this ascendancy would be otherwise employed than against the enemies of his country: His empire was that of virtue itself; it was alike honourable to him who submitted to it, and to him who exercised it.

Hoche was no less distinguished for his incorruptible integrity than for his unbounded generosity. His purse was always open to the calls of humanity and friendship; and he was incapable of thinking to replenish it by dishonourable means. Emulating the disinterestedness of ancient virtue, he thought that no manly sentiment could exist where probity was wanting. Liberal, perhaps, to excess of his own, he regarded the public money as a sacred deposit, to be appropriated only to the public service; and, after providing for the comfortable subsistence of his soldiers, his principal care

was

was how to effect the execution of his projects with the least expence to the national treasury.

It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the appointment of Hoche to the office of Minister at War should have excited the alarm of the whole host of contractors, commissaries and administrators, who had too long been permitted, by embezzling the public funds and devouring the subsistence of the soldier, to amass princely fortunes, which they expended in scenes of luxurious voluptuousness unsurpassed even in the most dissolute period of Roman history. Every engine that could influence the minds of the interested, or rouse the apprehensions of the weak, was employed to counteract his vast projects of military economy; and he found himself compelled to retire in disgust, from a situation in which he could not continue with complacency to himself, nor advantage to his country.

In a letter which he wrote about this time to Mr. Welch, a merchant at Frankfort, we find the following curious passage upon this subject: " Ever since
" I have asserted that the service of all the armies
" might be performed with twelve millions a month,
" and that at present to conclude a contract, is nothing
" else than empowering the contractor to share in the
" plunder of the public treasure, a swarm of blood
" suckers have conspired in complete chorus against
" me. You have seen the effect of their manœuvres.
" One of them talking to myself, but without know-
" ing me, said simply enough ' we hope this vile ari-
" stocratic economist will soon go to join Marceau in
" the other world.' You must imagine that I laughed
" very heartily at this strange address; O tempora!
" O patria!"

Such was the deplorable situation of the Republic before the epoch of the 18th Fructidor. All admitted that virtue was the appropriate basis of republican government, but few seemed willing to adopt the principle

ciple as a practical rule of conduct. The gangrene of corruption overspread every part of the body politic; and those who ought to have been the first to administer a remedy were the most zealous to exasperate the disease. The depravation of the public mind was in fact the fulcrum upon which the directorial and legislative conspirators had most confidently planted their lever for the re-edification of the former system. They knew that if they were successful in reviving in the people the love of their former habits, that of the government under which they most flourished would soon follow; the republic would be reduced to a mere nominal existence, ready to be surrendered on the first assault.

With this view, therefore, no less than that of the immediate embarrassment of the finances of the Republic, a spirit of unbounded venality, was every where encouraged; the most scandalous abuses in every department of the public service were connived at; and those who had enriched themselves by defrauding their country, were suffered to expend, with insolent impunity, the accumulated gains of their peculation in contaminating its morals. Every generous sentiment of our nature seemed exploded; poverty was reckoned a disgrace; and integrity, being considered an unfavourable offence against the profligate fashion of the times, was persecuted with relentless malignity. Morality being thus deprived of that consideration which forms one of its strongest supports, conscience alone was found but a feeble preservative from the contagion of example. The hideousness of vice seemed to vanish as her presence became familiar; the veil of outward decency, under which men usually disguise the noviciate of their approaches to her, was now thrown aside; and to desert the barren path of virtue for that which led to fortune and honour, no longer required the formality of an excuse.

But turning with disgust from this unsightly picture, the mind of the philanthropist will dwell with delight and admiration on the character of that hero, who regardless of the allurements of wealth or pleasure, and the frowns or smiles of contending factions, exhibited through the whole of his short career, a practical assertion of the dignity of human nature against the general depravity which surrounded him. The conduct of Hoche, unlike that of many of the leading men in the Republic, was not a parody, but a rigorous comment upon his professions. Amidst the affluence of treasure, which the latitude of his different commands placed entirely at his disposal, it was his glory to have preserved the purity of his mind unsullied, and to have persevered in the virtuous poverty of his ancestors. With him integrity acquired the permanency of habit at so early a period that resistance to temptation never occasioned even a struggle in his breast; he seemed to act rather from an instinct of conscience than a reflection of duty. We have already seen that he valued money only as an instrument of beneficence; and, as his liberality equalled his disinterestedness, so far was he from having amassed any private treasure, that at his death, his aged and infirm father, whom he had all along supported, but for the annuity decreed him by the gratitude of the legislative body, would have been consigned to a state of total indigence.

The satisfaction which the biographer feels in emblazoning the poverty of Hoche, cannot surpass the manly pride with which himself frequently recounted particular instances of it.

At the time of his setting out for Paris, after the discovery of Dumourier's treason, he entrusted to the care of one of his friends a small trunk, which contained all he had in the world. On his return to Dunkirk, he was informed, that his trunk had been stolen; and, small as his stock had been, he now
found

found himself reduced to the suit which he had on his person. The intelligence, however, did not give him a moment's uneasiness; on the contrary, he cheered himself with the reflection that the wardrobe of the conqueror of Leuctra and Mantinea had not been better furnished than his own. Hoche used often to repeat this story; but his delicacy prevented him from stating, that not only did he require no compensation from the depositary, but, the first considerable sum he was able to spare, was generously transmitted to the latter to relieve those losses which he had suffered in his own effects at the same time.

Far from wishing to forget the lowness of his origin, Hoche always dwelt with satisfaction upon the time which preceded his military progress. He still preserved the most tender attachment for the kind aunt who had taken care of his early years, and at the very height of his grandeur, he took a pride in introducing her to his friends. At the time of his last journey to Paris, he brought a party of them to see her, in a small shop which she kept in the market-place of Versailles, where he saluted her, with such a transport of gratitude and affection, that the tears started from his eyes. In fact, the incessant contemplation of the point whence he had set out, seemed to supply him with fresh vigour and animation in his course of perillous but successful enterprise.

The pleasure which he felt in rescuing from obscurity those in whom he perceived symptoms of talent, was no less vivid than that with which he retraced the fortunate gradations of his own life. To introduce such men to public notice, he regarded as a duty of gratitude towards the principles of that revolution to which he owed his own elevation; and while he asserted the cause of hidden merit against the injustice of fortune, he was always careful to convert it to the benefit of his country,

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We have already remarked several instances of this disposition in selecting for military preferment many of those whom the republic at present ranks among its ablest generals. We shall only add one more. In passing through Bouzonville in Nivose, of the year 2, he had an accidental interview with Augustus Mermet, then a captain of hussars. He instantly appointed him his own aid-de-camp. This engaging young man has since risen to the rank of general of brigade; and of all who enjoyed the patronage of Hoche, none has done more justice to his choice either in point of talent or fidelity.

Nature had eminently gifted him with that exquisite acuteness of penetration which discerns merit under its obscurest disguise and most unpromising appearances. Hoche indeed was not ignorant that to improve this talent to the degree of perfection necessary for governing mankind, and assigning to each of them his proper sphere of action, was a work of much time and unremitting observation of character. But no circumstance either of tediousness or difficulty could discourage him in the pursuit of any attainment which he was desirous to possess.

We have observed, that he was patient, even to frequent repetition, in explaining his own sentiments: he was no less patiently attentive to those of others. The art of listening was held of so much importance by a sage writer of antiquity, that he disdained not to occupy a complete treatise in describing its advantages. Hoche very probably never read this excellent manual; but he was not the less sensible of the value of its subject; and the correctness of his own judgment supplied him with the lessons and principles which it inculcates.

Before entering upon any course of action, he carefully consulted every person from whom he could expect any information. To one possessing his readiness
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of apprehension, a formal and lengthened discussion, must, indeed, have been disgusting in the extreme; "but," to use his own words, "the irksomeness of trifling details must be borne with from time to time, on account of the flashes of light, which occasionally break from them." On such occasions he would even descend to all the familiarities of conversation. His serious air became affable and free; his gravity insensibly softened; and, quitting the triple rampart of circumspection, with which he was usually fortified, he suffered the native kindness of his heart to become manifest on his lips. The smile which his countenance then assumed, attracted confidence, and confidence naturally led to the disclosure of circumstances which the person conversing with him intended at first to conceal. In fact, the apparent coldness of his manner had as much influence in this respect, as could have arisen from the most studied artifice. Striking the beholder at first sight with awe, it soon became the instrument of a complete ascendancy over him; and the least approach to familiarity on the part of Hoche was then considered as an uncommon condescension, and felt as a real obligation. Thus did that habit of reserve which he had adopted at so early a period, become, even without his own knowledge, his best policy.

Not but that this policy was occasionally counteracted by the ardency of his temper. He had sufficiently practised on himself to be able to suppress its first emotions. But the shock which it gave to his frame, discovered the severe struggle which he experienced in the attempt; and the impression of constraint was sometimes so visible in every feature, as to betray those feelings of which his immediate interest required the concealment.

Having, however, so far blunted the edge of his sensibility as to become tolerant with respect to the greater

greater part of human frailties, he still remained inexorable to that of cowardice. It was impossible for him to dissemble his profound contempt for those nerveless beings whose opinions of men and things always chimed with those of the faction which happened to be predominant, and who abandoned their best friend without a struggle, the moment he became the victim of power. The frequent instances of irresolution and treachery which he had witnessed during the different periods of the revolution, and more particularly during the thermidorean re-action, made him latterly view mankind with a mixed sentiment of pity and indignation, which superficial observers frequently mistook for pride.

It would be difficult to determine whether the qualities of the head or the heart have had most influence on the events of Hoche's life. All his actions appear to have resulted from a happy combination of both; and the art which he possessed in a pre-eminent degree, of electrifying the minds of men succeeded, perhaps, as much from the personal attachment with which he inspired them, as from the superiority of his talents.

One of those who obtained the most distinguished place in his affections was Citizen Dejeu, who had been an officer of cavalry in the time of the monarchy. They had served together, in the campaigns of the North, in the capacity of aides-de-camp to general Leveneur; but Dejeu, like Hoche, had the misfortune to incur the displeasure of the Robespierrian faction, and was suspended from his functions. The first act of Hoche, after the 9th Thermidor, was to recall his friend into the service with the rank of adjutant general in the army of La Vendee. The conduct of Dejeu proved that Hoche's kindness was not misplaced; and he terminated a series of valorous deeds by sacrificing his life to the good of his country, and the glory of his benefactor, in one of the combats which preceded

ceded the decisive victory of Quiberon, Hoche shed a flood of tears over the dead body, and never afterwards mentioned him but in terms of the most lively regret.

The intimacy to which he admitted the officers of all ranks who served under him, did not in the least prevent him from retaining that degree of superiority which was necessary for securing the prompt execution of his orders. But though rigidly attentive to repress the slightest tendency to disobedience, he was yet accessible to the language of reason, when urged in contradiction even to his most imperious behests.

In the course of his last campaign, he had been led by improper suggestions to dispatch certain orders to general Cherin, which the latter perceiving to be the work of malevolent intriguers who had taken advantage of their momentary separation, made no scruple formally to disobey. This act of resistance was represented by the same insidious advisers, who wished to effect an irreparable breach between the two generals, as an unpardonable infraction of discipline, and a marked insult to the personal feelings of Hoche. Cherin received a very severe letter from him; to which he returned a no less spirited answer, frankly stating the grounds of his disobedience and his determination to persist in it. Hoche's eyes were instantly opened; he hastened to see his friend, asked for the letter which he had sent to him, and joining it to Cherin's, he tore them both in pieces. "Think not," my friend," said he,—clasping him in his arms, and weeping over him—"that any thing can alter the confidence which I have reposed in you; for it is founded on our reciprocal esteem." It was an agreeable sight upon this occasion to view the austere, and sometimes even fierce countenance of the warrior, mantling with all the softness of friendship, and bedewed with the tears of repentance.

It was not surprising that Hoche drew down upon himself the vengeance of the Committee of Public Safety, for no man entertained a more sincere abhorrence of the atrocious cruelties that signalized its tyrannical administration. During that period, a person having one day, in his presence, remarked on the expeditious manner in which the guillotine disposed of its victims. "Yes," replied Hoche with the most expressive air of contempt, "it may rid an individual of an enemy, but it makes a hundred to the Republic."

With Hoche humanity was not a narrow feeling of party, but a sentiment of sympathy for all mankind. Cruelty, on whatever pretence it might be committed, excited in his breast the strongest indignation; and misery in any guise was never allowed to be insulted in his presence. At Coblenz, as a convict, with irons on his legs, was one day sweeping the pavement under Hoche's window, an aid-de-camp, in passing by, accosted him with some jesting observations on his appearance. But Hoche overheard him—"Silence!" exclaimed he angrily interrupting his amusement, "how can you look upon an unfortunate fellow-creature, and feel any other sentiment than that of pity?"

But those traitors who expected to find something favourable to their liberticide projects in the exquisite sensibility of Hoche, proceeded upon a gross misconception of his character. His predilection for republican government, unlike that of many of the pretended patriots of France, was not a puerile fondness for the fashion of the moment, conceived without reflection and abandoned without regret; it did not float upon the tremulous surface of popular opinion, nor could it be overwhelmed by the passing blast of factious usurpation. It was a principle which seemed to have entwined itself with the very fibres of his frame, and which

which retained its hold even in the agonies of death. He knew how to separate the injustice of the ruling individuals from the constitution which they had to administer; and notwithstanding all the evils of which he had himself been the innocent sufferer, it was impossible to charge him with a single expression that could be turned to the disadvantage of the republic. This, indeed, was a subject to which he never alluded but with reluctance; for however capable himself to discriminate between men and principles, he was too intimate with the human heart, not to know that by the ignorant mass of his fellow-citizens they would be inseparably blended.

"We have been in the same garrison together," said a young officer to him one day at table.—
 "Where," said Hoche.—"In the Conciergerie," answered the other, smiling.—"My friend," added Hoche in a tone of the utmost mildness, "Let us banish all remembrance of that unfortunate period, and may the wrongs which we have suffered make us tremble, lest we should, in our turn, be guilty of injustice towards our country."

But it was the plan of those who wished to prepare the minds of the people for the restoration of their former task-masters to keep alive that remembrance, and to involve every true republican in the merited obliquity of the revolutionary tyrants. The design, however, did not escape the observation of Hoche; and he set himself to counteract it at a very early period, with all his characteristic intrepidity. Soon after the fall of Robespierre, he hesitated not to aver in the presence of some conventional pro-consuls, who favoured the system of reaction: "That the true Robespierrists were those whose iniquitous administration after the 9th Thermidor, elevated Robespierre to a place in the Pantheon, by making the people believe that

“ the existence of the Republic depended upon that
 “ of the individual Robespierre.”

During the crisis which preceded the acceptance of the constitution of the third year, he happened to be in company with several public functionaries, who had the boldness to assert, “ that France might then legally have a king if the people chose to vote for one in the primary assemblies.”—“ I have forty thousand brave companions,” exclaimed Hoche, rising from the table with indignation, “ who will prove that the people have not the power of giving themselves a king.”

When we reflect upon that series of actions, no less beneficent than splendid, and deserving alike of esteem and admiration, which has now passed in review before us, we shall cease to wonder at the deep and lasting impression of sorrow which the death of Hoche occasioned both in his own army and in the interior.

In La Vendee he was universally lamented. Mausoleums have been erected to his memory in several places of that department; many of the inhabitants wear his portrait on their breasts; and some of them have generously offered an asylum to the age and infirmities of his father. All have emulated each other in testifying their gratitude and respect to the shade of the pacificator of La Vendee; and his name will long operate among them as a powerful talisman to prevent the revival of civil discord.

The news of his death reached Paris on the first of Vendemiaire, while the Directory, attended by an immense concourse of people, were engaged in celebrating the fifth anniversary of the foundation of the republic. The consternation with which the intelligence was received, and the striking contrast of the melancholy looks of the spectators on their return from the Champ-de-Mars to the general expression of joy with which they

they crowded to the scene, are forcibly described in the eloquent discourse pronounced by Reveillere Le Paux at the funeral procession which was celebrated in honour of Hoche on the 10th of the same month.

Amidst the inconsolable lamentations of every class of his fellow-citizens, we should not pass unnoticed the singular instance of regret exhibited by a faithful attendant of the inferior creation. During his first campaign with the army of the Moselle, a dog took refuge between his legs from the pursuit of an Austrian hussar. From that circumstance Hoche conceived a liking for the animal, gave him the name of *Pitt*, and was accompanied by him wherever he went, in prison, on a march, and even in the heat of battle. In the latter situation, indeed, Pitt seemed eager to signalize his gratitude for the protection which he had received by darting upon the enemy, and displaying the most evident proofs of a rational sensibility to the indications of grief or joy which the various fortune of the day might impress upon his master's countenance. After the death of Hoche he wandered every where in quest of his lost protector, frequently interrupting his course and listening to every sound in expectation of hearing his voice; his air became wild and melancholy; he fell by degrees into a state of listless inactivity, howled incessantly, and thus pined away with sorrow.

The Abbé De Saint Pierre considers the three following circumstances as necessary to form the character of a great man:

1st. A grand motive; or an ardent desire to promote the public good.

2dly. The surmounting of great difficulties, as well by a distinguished courage and patient constancy of soul, as by the uncommon talents of an understanding, correct, comprehensive, and fertile in expedients.

3dly. The

3dly. The procuring of great advantages, either to mankind in general, or to one's country in particular.

Whether each of these three ingredients are not to be found in the character of Lazarus Hoche, is a question which we entertain no fear in leaving to the determination of the reader.

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